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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY:

# CULTIVATING A CARING SCHOOL COMMNITY

BY

DONNA J. STASZENSKI

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

in

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

Edmonton, Alberta

SPRING 1995

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a Thesis entitled Not for Women Only: Cultivating a Caring School Community submitted by Donna Staszenski in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Dr. B. Young

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December 8, 1994

## ABSTRACT

The study presented here considers the possibilities for understanding school administration from the perspective of care as developed in the work of Nel Noddings and others. A review of relevant works of feminist theory and educational administration provides an overview of how the theory and practice of school leadership may be viewed from a feminist perspective.

While the notion of caring in school leadership requires theoretical support, it also needs to be shown through example based on the lived experience of a school leader who is strongly committed to care in her work. The study exemplifies the belief in the importance of building alternative understandings of leadership through telling the stories of women in schools.

The study attempts to show the multiple dimensions of caring through an in-depth case study of one school administrator in an urban, heterogeneous elementary school. Through observations, interviews, document analysis, and extensive visits to a school, the study highlights the dimensions of caring as manifested in the thought, practices, and biography of an educational leader. Rather than being a form of procedural or technical knowledge, care is shown to be integral to both the identity of the leader and the kinds of relationships she is able to foster with students, teachers, and others involved in the life of the school.

In particular, the importance of community-building in a school context is emphasized as a way to cultivate care in the work and relationships of adults and children in a school. The study re-emphasizes the importance of understanding care in terms of the quality of relationships and interactions in a school. Such a view helps to re-conceptualize as well the roles and purposes of being a school administrator.

The study concludes with some concrete examples of how care can be cultivated in a school through administrative initiatives such as a school-wide discipline policy. Through such examples, it can be shown that the ethic of care is an appropriate orientation for thinking about school administration in educational terms.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following thesis, on creating caring school communities, would not have been possible without the support and help of several caring people.

My understanding about the possibility for caring schools was initially fostered by Vern King, my own principal. As I look back, I realize that Vern built a supportive community of teachers and learners, where an ethic of care among all staff was cultivated. Staff, ten years later, fondly remember Vern and acknowledge his leadership and the contribution he made to our school division. My continued exploration of caring educational leadership was possible because of my work with Rose, a caring leader. I am grateful to Rose, who consented to lend her voice to this study and who provided me with the stories of leadership on which to base my work. Her conversations with me, my observations of her in school and within the educational community contributed immensely to my understanding of caring leadership and helped to make the study possible.

It was a privilege to work with Dr. Linda LaRocque and my colleagues on the Partnership Schools Practicum Project. It was through the collaborative work of Dr. LaRocque and her encouragement that made my two years at the university a valuable learning endeavour.

I am grateful to Dr. Beth Young for her support and guidance over several years of graduate work. Her interest in feminist thought and educational leadership rekindled my belief that we must continue our struggle to have the voices and stories of women heard. As an advisor, Dr. Young invited her students to participate in learning with her. I thank her for her encouragement, patience, guidance and faith. Her caring support helped me to finish my work.

It has been a privilege to take a number of courses from Dr. Gordon McIntosh and then to have him on my supervisory committee. I would like to thank Dr. McIntosh for his thoughtful reading of my work and the theoretical perspectives he brought to questions of leadership and the ethic of care. I admire the work he has done for educators and hope that he continues to bring his understandings of an ethic of care to those studying educational leadership.

I also appreciated the insightful comments and challenging questions that Dr. Andrea Borys brought to the oral. I appreciate the work she has done in the field of education and her strong commitment to feminist work. Her desire to see that women's

stories are told and celebrated will help to end discriminatory practices.

Sturgeon School Division provided me with the sabbatical and the extra year of study to complete my Master of Education. I wish to thank them for encouraging professional development and growth among educators.

Most of all, I thank my husband, Hans Smits for his continued belief that I would finish this piece of work. His rereading of my chapters, words of wisdom and discussion about what an ethic of care means to educational leadership helped me to search my own thoughts about several theories. His own strong ethic of care and way of being provided me with much support. I am indebted to him for his never ending encouragement. I look forward to our continued work in education and know that we will continue to learn from each other.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


Chapter 1 ..... 1

THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP ..... 1
- Some Questions About Leadership ..... 1
- Questions for Research ..... 3
- The Significance of the Research Questions ..... 5
- Considerations ..... 6
- Approaching the Research Questions ..... 7
- Establishing Trustworthiness ..... 10
- Ethical Considerations ..... 11

Chapter 2 ..... 13

MORAL DIMENSIONS OF CARING AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ..... 13
- Personal Notion of Care ..... 13
- Care and Justice
  - Differing Perspectives ..... 14
- The Relationship of Culture and Community ..... 22

Chapter 3 ..... 27

ROSE'S STORY ..... 27
- Her History ..... 27
- Pre-teacher Beginnings ..... 27
- Her Beginnings as an Educator ..... 28
- Becoming an Administrator ..... 29
- Her Philosophy and Beliefs ..... 30
- The Need for a Strong Philosophy ..... 31
- Honouring Human Potential ..... 31
- Humanizing the Environment ..... 32
- Creating a Child Centered Environment ..... 33
- Building Communities ..... 34
- Biography, Caring and Leadership ..... 34

Chapter 4 ..... 36

CARING AND COMMUNITY ..... 36
Caring for Others ..... 37
Care is Shown in the Way People Inhabit Space ..... 37
Caring is Intrinsically Pedagogic ..... 44
Care is Being There for Others ..... 46
Caring Cultivates the Culture of Community ..... 51
Shared Symbols of the Community ..... 53
Story Telling Nurtures the Community's Culture ..... 55
Celebrating Community ..... 58
Community Promotes a Caring Identity ..... 60
Enriching the Community Through Personal Philosophies ..... 60
Staff Development Meetings and Time Tabling Support the Growth of a Caring Identity ..... 63
A Sense of Community Flourishes ..... 65

Chapter 5 ..... 68

REFLECTIONS ..... 68

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 75

APPENDIX 1 ..... 80

APPENDIX 2 ..... 95
RESOURCES ..... 95

APPENDIX 3 ..... 101
PICTURES AND DOCUMENTS ..... 101

# Chapter 1

# THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

> If theory doesn't serve, inform and change our moral and critical practice, it is of no help.
>
> Foster, 1986, p. 29

> When we want to be moral people, we consider what kind of life we should lead.
>
> Noddings, 1992, p. 139

## Some Questions About Leadership

As an assistant principal, I often experienced the challenges of the immediate situation, which sometimes overpowered my basic philosophy or beliefs about how I wanted to react in a situation. What I wanted to be as an administrator, and what I actually practiced, were not always consistent. When I received a sabbatical from my school division, I felt that a year of study at the university would provide time for me to reflect on my practices and ideas about being an administrator of an elementary/junior high school. I also realized that I wanted to work closely with an individual who really cared about children and considered them the reason for her being in a school. As my studies proceeded, I found that my feminist beliefs about education and educational leaders, as expressed in the ethic of care, became another focus for me. I came to believe that it is important for an educational leader to unravel one's thoughts about leadership and then develop a philosophy of leadership congruent with one's beliefs. As stated above by Foster, theory and

practice can inform each other. Thus, the meaning of being a leader in a school derives from both theory and practice and how those inform each other in the course of a leader's story.

In order to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a leader, I wanted to be a "flower on the lapel" of an educational leader: to be with her as she made crucial decisions, gave pats on the back or spoke with students in the hallway. I wanted to understand and ask questions about what leadership meant to her; to share her lived experiences. As most leadership research has been done about men from male perspectives (Helgesen, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1989; Heilbrun, 1988; Gilligan, 1982), I felt that it was important to explore the experiences of a woman leader in order to give women alternative views and understandings. The authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing* consider the omission of women from research as a serious problem. They emphasize that "Developmental theory has established men's experience and competence as a baseline against which both men's and women's development is then judged, often to the detriment or misreading of women" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Larule, 1986, p. 7). My interest was in exploring what some women's experiences could offer to our understanding educational leadership.

The intention of my research, then, was to be immersed in an educational setting in order to learn from a woman administrator who had been recognized by her colleagues as one who leads in a nurturing and caring way. As a teacher I had had the opportunity to work with a male administrator whom I thought of as a caring, nurturing leader. However, as a feminist I felt that it was crucial to

begin to understand and to tell the stories of women leaders. There was so little documentation by, for, and about women that as Heilbrun asserts, "Women must turn to one another for stories; they must share the stories of their lives and their hopes and their unacceptable fantasies." (1988, p. 44)

I set out on my research with the above considerations in mind. I began my research with the struggle to understand my own experiences and questions about leadership. This journey was enabled by observations of Rose's leadership practices, my conversations with her, and a reading of literature on leadership and care, especially literature informed by feminist thought and perspectives. My exploration is intended to contribute to our knowledge about women as educational leaders and the possibilities for caring, nurturing leadership in our schools.

**Questions for Research**

In the beginning of my research I was guided by the question : "What does it mean to be a caring educational leader?" That is a question that considers the relationship of the ethic of care to possibilities for school leadership. The question was important for me as I wanted to look at the notion of caring, understood from a feminist perspective, and connect it to the practice of educational leadership. I realized some of the complexity and layers of questions embedded within my question. Nevertheless, the question provided an important focus for me and yet allowed me to shift focus slightly to consider the culture of a caring school.

In terms of conducting the actual research with Rose I was guided by more specific questions such as:

1. What is the background of the individual who will be the participant in my study?

2. How have past experiences influenced the present thoughts and actions of the educational leader?

3. How does the educational leader perceive herself as an educational leader or what does being an educational leader mean to her?

4. What does the educational leader think before, during and after making decisions?

5. How does the educational leader interact with colleagues, teachers, students, parents, and central office personnel?

6. What does this educational leader do to create a caring and nurturing atmosphere?

7. Does the educational leader's thinking today differ greatly from the way she thought when she first became a principal?

8. Does feminist literature offer possibilities for interpreting and constructing meanings of educational leadership theories and practices?

The questions allowed me entry points to discover how Rose's experiences exemplified elements of an ethic of care as embodied in the practice of a woman leader and her own storying of her experiences.

## The Significance of the Research Questions

> The atmosphere was intimate and happy and I felt very secure. On many occasions there were expressions of sharing, kindness, and enthusiasm. This is not to say there were never tensions in the school among the teachers. But the warmth of the culture helped make a difficult job manageable. The head teacher played a large part in creating such an atmosphere, leaving, for example, tokens of appreciation such as chocolates or sherry for teachers after a hard term...
>
> (Acker, 1990, p. 28)

What is it about a head teacher/educational leader who creates such a warm, nurturing atmosphere? What is it about this atmosphere, this culture that supports sharing, kindness and enthusiasm? Noddings contends that we all have a need to be cared for in the sense that we want to be understood, received, respected and recognized. However, not all people learn to care for other human beings (1992, p. xii). I hope that my study will contribute to the understanding of what educational leaders can do to foster the possibilities of caring environments for all persons in their schools.

My intention in writing for educators and for those interested in the quality of children's lives is to plant a seed of thought about how we, as adults, treat children and colleagues in our schools. School administrators and leaders may find these ideas useful for reflection about their own practices. Teachers may find the study helpful in the development of their understandings of educational responsibilities and leadership practices. The caring leadership practices discussed in the findings may encourage educators to study and analyze their own actions and situations in order to

implement changes or they may be affirmed in their practices and identities. Superintendents, school board trustees, and central office personnel responsible for school programs may wish to consider the findings of the study when they are hiring new administrators, developing system goals or discipline policies. They may wish to consider whether care and nurturing are prevalent qualities in the learning environments of schools under their supervision. University professors responsible for teaching and challenging prospective educational leaders may gain insights about women and leadership and about leadership from a caring perspective. From this, professors may see the importance of discussing these issues in their classes.

**Considerations**

My personal prejudices and assumptions were important to consider before beginning this research study. I felt that qualities such as nurturing and caring can be fostered in beneficial ways by both women and men in schools and that feminist research about the ethic of care has much to offer educational leaders.

The study was delimited in many ways. My intention was to focus my research on one woman administrator. The educational leader to be interviewed has been recognized by her colleagues for her outstanding contribution to the field of education. This woman has shared her beliefs and philosophies in various presentations given to administrators and teachers. She was, therefore, an appropriate choice as the central participant in my study.

Rather than creating generalizable results, my study aims to be an in-depth study of one administrator's practice, as a basis for reflecting on caring leadership practice in schools.

**Approaching the Research Questions**

As a woman who has had experience as an administrator, I was particularly interested in the experience and practice of administration by women. The opportunity to work with a woman who was seen as a successful caring educational leader became possible because of my involvement with the Partnership Schools Practicum Project (PSPP). The project was initiated, in part, by Field Experiences at the University of Alberta. People working in Field Experiences and others involved with the practicum felt that there was a need for more collaboration between schools and the university, particularly in terms of the practicum. The educational leader, Rose, with whom I would be working was one of the first to volunteer to be a participant in the project.

I had heard Rose speak two years prior to beginning my master's program at the University of Alberta. At this conference, Rose was also presented with an award as "Administrator of the Year." During her talk Rose spoke about her educational beliefs and practices. She spoke about growth and encouragement and what schools should be like. I left believing that, yes, educational leaders could make a difference. Leaders could believe in people and entrust them to make changes in the educational system. Rose had an immense impact on me that day. I felt optimistic about future

possibilities. I was fortunate, indeed, to link my own interests and research with Rose's experiences some time later.

As a member of the PSPP team, I visited Rose's school with the team to receive an orientation about the practicum project. My own direct contact with Rose was made by telephone early in January when I called to arrange an interview with her. The reason for this first meeting was to visit with Rose and to explain my study. We talked about her beginnings as an administrator and how she presently saw her role as a leader. We talked about my experiences as a teacher and leader and my expectations for this year at university. This initial meeting was not for data collection; it was an opportunity for us to share our ideas and to get to know one another. I felt very comfortable with the process and was pleased that she had agreed to be a participant in my study.

Ethical considerations were discussed. Since Rose had been a participant in other studies she was very knowledgeable and at ease with the research process. We decided that my interviews with her and observations of her would constitute most of the fieldwork for my study and with Rose's permission the interviews were recorded on audio cassette. Also with her permission and assistance, I collected documents which reflected Rose's work and perspectives, for example: school correspondence, the school handbook, newsletters, principal's notes to staff and parents, and photographs.

My first observation of Rose occurred later in January when I spent an hour one morning shadowing her for a class assignment. I had contacted Rose again and arranged for a time that was acceptable to her for me to complete my assignment. She was

helpful and giving of her time; I hoped that I would not be intruding. I suggested a morning prior to class time, a time usually full of observable activities in a school. I wanted to experience this time of day with Rose.

Preparing for my shadowing experience, I reread Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p.126) and was informed that I would probably be nervous and feel out of place. I had been to the school several times by now to attend meetings regarding the practicum and was prepared for this assignment, or so I thought. But it is one thing to come into the school for a meeting or to watch a presentation and quite another to be there taking notes while following the principal around the school. I had my notebook and pencil all ready. I was prepared to write down every word, or every important word. My glasses were clean. I'd even worn my flat shoes in case we had to make a dash for somewhere. Rose had me clarify my task and what she was to do. I explained I wanted her to do whatever she does in her capacity as principal. Then began the phenomenal task of keeping up with this energetic woman. Bogdan and Biklen were quite right. This experience did make me feel like a novice.

The shadowing exercise was but one of my observations of Rose. In order to develop a clearer sense of my own research questions, I visited the school approximately twenty times to observe Rose and conduct interviews with her prior to, during, and after the practicum, from January to April. My observations included six weekly staff meetings, cooperating teachers' workshops, student teachers' workshops, a planning meeting of the three administrator participants, a celebration for all students in

the school gymnasium and many informal observations of staff room and hallway interactions. Three formal interviews were conducted. During the interviews my research questions guided our discussion. I was not there so much to get exact answers to my questions but more to have Rose speak about her experiences and to tell me her story. I also attended two presentations she gave to colleagues where I gathered information about her beliefs and leadership practices.

**Establishing Trustworthiness**

As I stated above, I spent a considerable amount of time at the school observing Rose and interviewing her prior to, during, and after the practicum. Through the Partnership Schools Practicum Project, a group of seven master's students and our project supervisor met weekly to discuss the project. These meetings provided an opportunity for us, as peers in the research project, to discuss the process, concerns, questions, and emergent research design changes. Owens considers peer debriefing an important aspect of research: "Peer consultation provides opportunities while the inquiry is in progress to check my thinking and observations, to raise questions and concerns, and to talk through problems of which the researcher may or may not be aware" (1987, p.189).

During the process of doing research and collecting data, I was guided by the principle of triangulation. Triangulation, as it is referred to by Borg and Gall (1989, p. 239), involves the cross-checking of data, and includes interviews, observations, document analyses, photographs (see Appendix II), personal journals, and self-

reports. I was present at the school for staff meetings, student teacher meetings and had many opportunities to observe Rose in many different settings. My two years of work with the practicum project allowed me to confirm my findings. Through many informal discussions with staff and student teachers, my thoughts about Rose were verified. The perceptions, findings, and interpretations of the collected data were continuously corroborated with Rose and relevant others in the study and as previously stated Rose had an opportunity to review transcripts of interviews. The research group discussions, where we met to discuss the project, promoted triangulation and helped me give shape to the written report of my research represented in this thesis. In order to ensure the transferability of this study, a record of data collection and analysis was maintained.

Although I have taken several years to complete my thesis, I have revisited my data periodically, and more importantly, Rose's stories and her experiences have become part of my work as an educational leader. As I struggled to make decisions, write school policy, or determine goals for myself, I would refer back to Rose's stories. Parts of my thesis evolved as a result of my own desire to test Rose's theories and to reaffirm my belief in caring educational leadership.

**Ethical Considerations**

My research is one part of a set of interrelated substudies in the Partnership Practicum Schools Project. Dr. Linda LaRocque, research coordinator of the Partnership Project, obtained school

district approval for the research project and as a team we submitted our projects to the Ethics Review Committee, University of Alberta. A letter confirming Rose's continued participation in the project and consent from Rose for our involvement was obtained. The letter included a brief description of the study and the role of the administrator in the study.

I also met with Rose, gave her a copy of my initial proposal so that she would be aware of my needs. At this time, I indicated to Rose that I would respect her right to decline to participate in or to withdraw from the research at any time. I assured her that the Partnership Project members would maintain confidentiality. Rose had an opportunity to review transcripts from our interviews and also to review my shadowing assignment. We have spoken informally since the practicum during other work together and Rose gave her permission for me to continue with my work and then share with her the final document.

In the following chapter, I will consider in more depth the ideas that guided my understanding of leadership and care and how that was shown in Rose's work.

## Chapter 2

# MORAL DIMENSIONS OF CARING AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

> Caring is a capacity (or a set of capacities) that requires cultivation. It requires time.
> (Noddings, 1992, p.114)

### Personal Notion of Care

I began this study with certain beliefs about being an educational leader in a school. For example, I believed that the notion of caring is exemplified by the respectful treatment of children and staff by the leader. Being a caring leader meant taking responsibility for developing a safe and secure environment in which learning and risk-taking could flourish. A caring leader encourages ideas and innovations. A leader, guided by caring, models thoughtfulness and kindness towards others and recruits and supports a school staff who really "care" about kids.

As I worked with colleagues who were also proceeding with their research and our advisor, I realized that the beliefs I had at the beginning of my research required more analysis and the term "caring" required more definition. What does it really mean to be a caring leader and what does caring look like in action? I had an intuition and practical sense of what this might be. However, I wanted to give the notion of caring more shape and description, one that could legitimately be defended in terms of both educational and feminist thought.

## Care and Justice: Differing Perspectives

> The context of schooling is a complex fabric woven from the threads of individual lives - teachers, students, parents, and citizens - the threads of group values and culture, and the social threads of politics and economics. Administrative decisions are moral decisions and, as such, must recognize the weave of the fabric.
>
> Foster (p. 26)

Have you ever tried to separate the threads of a tightly woven fabric? The task is extremely difficult. I have come to the conclusion that combing through the bundles of theories about moral leadership and the ethic of care is as challenging. To explain my research question about what it means to be a caring leader of a caring school, I share with the reader my own exploration of the concepts of care and justice and my own understanding of how they form part of moral theory.

According to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* the definition of moral is "pertaining to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, volition, or character of responsible beings" (1993, p.1826). Educational leaders are often in situations where they must decide who may or may not be at fault, sort out conflicts, or make major decisions about people's lives. Moral development theorists have attempted to explain how individuals solve moral dilemmas. However, it is not desirable nor necessary for the purpose of my study to delve into moral theory and philosophy. What I do think is important is to consider how an ethic of care has become part of the domain of moral theory alongside the idea of justice. For instance, the moral

shape of caring has been developed in the work of Carol Gilligan, who has made us aware of the limitations and gendered quality of a narrowly defined notion of justice.

Gilligan in her text, *In a Different Voice* (1982), examined the notions of moral voice and moral orientation. She interviewed and listened to women engage in dialogue about their own lived experiences with moral conflicts. Gilligan's findings contradicted the work of moral developmental theorists such as Freud, Erickson, Piaget, and Kohlberg. Their studies often neglected to include girls and women and simply focused on males. For instance, Kohlberg's description of the development of moral judgement from childhood to adulthood was based on a study of eighty-four boys, yet he claimed universality for the findings of the study. Gilligan recognized a flaw in Kohlberg's six stages of moral development -when groups not included in his original sample were tested against his stage theory, they rarely reached the higher stages of development. Women were locked into Kohlberg's third stage of moral development, where morality was thought of in interpersonal terms and goodness was tied to helping and pleasing others. Stages four, five, and six, linked to rules and universal principles of justice, were seen to be more characteristic of men. (p.18)

Gilligan showed that with women as the participants in a moral development study, a different experience of moral development occurred. As Gilligan reviewed her data, two distinct moral voices were heard regarding moral problems and how such problems were solved. These voices suggested different ways of experiencing oneself in relation to others. She hypothesized that

these two distinct modes of moral judgment could be understood from a justice perspective or a responsibility or care perspective. A moral problem considered from a justice perspective looks at rules and an individual's rights in a formal and abstract fashion. A moral problem considered from a care perspective describes the context of the situation so as to better understand the connections between responsibility and relationships. Care is expressed through connection while justice assumes separation. (1982, p.19)

As part of a collaborative work with Gilligan, Nona Lyons (1990, 1988) helps us to further understand the care and justice dichotomy when she asked participants to respond to the question, "What does morality mean to you?" Two adults gave these two different definitions:

> Morality is basically having a reason for a way of knowing what's right, what one ought to do: and when you are put into a situation where you have to choose from among alternatives, being able to recognize when there is an issue of "ought" at stake and when there is not; and then.... having some reason for choosing among alternatives.
>
> Morality is a type of consciousness, I guess, a sensitivity to humanity, that you can affect someone else's life. You can affect your own life, and you have the responsibility not to endanger other people's lives or to hurt other people. So morality is complex. Morality is realizing that there is a play between self and others and that you are going to have to take responsibility for both of them. It's sort of a consciousness of your influence over what's going on. (1988, p.21)

Lyons explained that in the first instance we have an individual alone deciding what ought to be done; morality becomes a discrete moment of "choosing." In the second instance we have an individual aware, connected, and attending to others; morality

becomes a "type of consciousness" which, although rooted in time, is not bound by the single moment (p. 22). Rather than looking at what ought to be done, in a caring situation one considers how the other will be affected, thinks of the circumstances, and then makes a decision. There is a human connection, a reaching out to the other. This approach is very different from the detached abstract justice one where rights and rules are considered first.

In *Caring, A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984), Nel Noddings also challenged the hierarchical picture of moral reasoning where "the language of the father," predominated through terms such as justification, justice and fairness. Noddings felt that it was important to hear the voice of the mother, which for the most part in research has been silent, and to acknowledge the importance and validity of an ethic of care in moral reasoning. For her, the foundation of ethical response is through human caring, the memory of caring and being cared for (p. 1, 1984). Noddings' investigation builds from Gilligan's work in describing how women approach moral problems: women must have a concrete picture of the situation and assume a personal responsibility for the choices to be made. "They define themselves in terms of caring and work their way through moral problems from the position of the one-caring" (1984, p.8).

Gilligan's and Noddings' work has received criticism as well as accolades. The criticism is as a result of the association of moral voice with gender; that is, the assertion that the care perspective or care focus in moral reasoning is more characteristic of women. The accolades come as a result of questioning the absence of women in

research data collection and demonstrating the importance and need for a female perspective and voice in psychological and educational research. Their work has also inspired others to continue to ask questions about women's place in research. Certainly that was a strong impetus in my own work and my desire to build an understanding of educational leadership in terms of a feminist reading of justice and caring.

That view is also supported by Debra Shogan in her book, *Care and Moral Motivation* (1988). She probes the question of morality and the ethic of care and examines the work of Gilligan and Noddings to add new insights into how we can think about moral life. Shogan maintains that it is critical to explore the ways in which women and men live their moral lives in order to have a clearer understanding of morality. It is not just how people talk about their lives and describe how they are moral caring individuals. Shogan's work explores what people, women and men, do if they are caring people and more specifically what motivates them to act the way they do.

According to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "care" denotes "serious attention, heed; regard, inclination, (to, for) (p. 338). Shogan considers two similar possibilities: the idea of caring "for" and caring "about". Caring "for" can be thought of as a task-oriented view where we may be attending to someone or something, as a nurse in a hospital, for instance. Caring "about" is to acknowledge or pay heed to someone, as in caring about enhancing someone's welfare (1988, pp. 7 & 8).

Shogan contends that there are two character traits central to a caring person: the fairly permanent desire that others' welfare be

enhanced (benevolence), and the fairly permanent desire that others be treated fairly (justice). A caring person is both benevolent and just. Benevolence and justice come into play in two different moral situations, the difference being the need for a process of adjudication. Adjudication is not required when a caring person is faced with enhancing someone's welfare. as an example, someone who is homeless, injured, or troubled. A caring person, who helps or desires that someone help, displays benevolence. Where a conflict occurs and adjudication is required, a caring person hopes that the other will receive fair treatment as well as ensuring their welfare. In both cases, however, "a caring person is motivated by what happens to sentient beings" and there are no ulterior motives such as rewards, reciprocal action from another, or the need to be seen as a virtuous person (1988, p.18). As Shogan sees it, Gilligan and Noddings do not differentiate between moral circumstances which require adjudication from those where others' welfare is the only concern. She emphasizes, "care and justice are not appropriately contrasted since a caring person cares that others are treated well *and* that they are treated fairly" (1988, p. 55).

Moral and ethical questions are a part of our lived experiences and how we act or react in difficult moments - wondering what should have been done or not done - becomes a compelling question. My understanding of what it means to be a caring person in moral situations has been enriched by the work of the above authors. For the purpose of my study, I have worked from the premise that moral leadership must incorporate elements of both care and justice. That

is particularly important in terms of educational leadership and the way caring is manifested in actions and solicitude for the other.

From a feminist perspective I must further ask the question, "What does this mean for educational leaders?" Women have been socialized and trained to be caregivers and seek solutions to moral dilemmas that consider everyone. The circumstances of the situation and the people involved are of utmost concern. Justice in isolation from caring for an individual's welfare is in opposition to a truly moral response: singer-songwriter, Joni Mitchell, explained that when she was writing a song about violence against women, she was struck by the thought that the word justice could be thought of as "just ice" (Edmonton Folk Music Festival, August 1994). Women are struggling against oppression. Justice or fair treatment cannot occur unless this oppression is acknowledged and responded to in just and caring ways. A "just ice" perspective on moral reasoning, where only rights and rules are considered, is not enough.

A care perspective, which has been attributed mainly to women, should be part of moral decisions by both men and women. It should be noted that women are not the only people capable of care and that men can also be concerned about the oppression of others and show care in response. I concur with Shogan that care must be shared by everyone in a community. If only a few people take responsibility for seeing that others are treated well and fairly then some of those few, and more than likely it will be a few women, will end up sacrificing their lives.

It is this idea of a caring community that compels me to further thought and discussion. As an educational leader concerned

about ethical moral practice I want to consider how we become people who care that others are treated well and fairly. This is something that extends beyond the responsibility only of feminists. Are parents and guardians the only ones to instill moral beliefs? Where does the school fit? What is it about the culture or community of the school that could foster and nurture caring individuals?

Noddings' belief is that we learn our moral way of life in "the inner circle" from our parents, who hopefully are good loving people. She does not agree with Freud's assessment of morality which begins with fear. Her belief is that morality and an ethic of caring are demonstrated in loving relationships (1992, p. 91). Alfie Kohn in his text *The Brighter Side of Human Nature, Altruism and Empathy in Everyday Life* (1990) like Noddings, believes that warm empathetic parents raising children who care about others are important. It is also important that these parents have humanistic values and make a commitment to communicate desirable behavior to their children. "Children should be encouraged to wrestle with moral questions and to think for themselves about such matters but also to compare their inclinations and actions to others" (Kohn, 1990, p. 90). Kohn suggests that to be caring human beings we need a morality of thought and of feeling, of principle and of care. In his analysis of care and ethics he indicates that there are deficiencies with partial conceptions of morality and that to promote prosocial behaviors, caring and justice, principle and empathy must be emphasized (1990, p. 265). Parental guidance and modeling are of key importance in

raising children who are thoughtful, caring, moral people. But from the perspective of the school, it doesn't end there.

The authors (Besag, 1990; Kohn, 1990; Noddings, 1992; Shogan, 1988) claim that parents cannot do this all on their own. Educators and schools must also take responsibility for promoting concern for others, offering opportunities to practice caring skills, and modeling caring and helping actions. Our concern should be with children, especially if "we wish to help our society to move beyond selfishness, then we ought to look not only at what can be done at home .. but also in the schools" (Kohn, 1990, p. 163).

If it is within loving, caring relationships that children learn about becoming caring individuals, then I believe that it is important to know what a caring school community and a strong school culture look like. To understand caring leadership and caring schools a definition for culture and community are required.

**The Relationship of Culture and Community**

The terms culture and community are used interchangeably in some of the works I have read. Deal and Kennedy define culture as a cohesion of values, myths, heroes, symbols, ritual and ceremony. The values become part of a shared philosophy. People are recognized for their efforts and may become the heroes who are role models for the organization. Symbols, rituals and ceremonies are visible ways that an organization can show what it stands for. A weak or strong culture can affect everything from how decisions are made to how people dress (1982, pp. 4-6). In simple terms, culture

is "the way we do things and relate to each other around here" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1990, p. 37).

For Sergiovanni, in *Building Community in Schools* (1993), community is defined as the tie that binds students and teachers together. Shared values and ideals lift individuals to higher levels of self-understanding, commitment, and performance. When the school community is confronted with issues of control it relies on norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality, and natural interdependence to deal with the issue (1993, p. 4).

Sergiovanni quotes the work of sociologist Tonnies to further explore the idea of community (gemeinschaft) in contrast to the idea of society (gesellschaft). Within a community, relationships are close, informal and cooperative. Community members have a sense of shared obligations and commitments, a common purpose. Schools become places where relationships are family-like and where values and ideas are shared. Emotions are acceptable and sacrificing one's self-interest for the community members is common. Within a society, community values are replaced by contractual ones. There are clearly defined roles, expectations, policies, and rules which can lead to loneliness, isolation, and feelings of disconnectedness. A society has the characteristics of being bureaucratic and managerial, with a strong emphasis on technical language. For example, students are seen as clients who have problems to be solved; making decisions, sharing, and reflecting together becomes site-based management; concerns about what we are doing, why and how well becomes Total Quality Management (1993, p.10).

Sergiovanni believes that the language of gesellschaft distances us from the real concerns of people and real problems of schooling. As educators, we must commit to the principle "love thy neighbour as thyself" which is the key to determine authentic community. He argues that altruistic love brings people together. Altruistic love is an expression of selfless concern for the other that stems from devotion or obligation (1993, p. 28).

Schools cannot become caring communities unless caring is valued and unless norms are created that point the way to caring. The culture of a school community requires that shared ideologies or coherent sets of beliefs tie people together. Ideologies are a means by which we make sense of our lives, find direction, and commit ourselves to courses of action. In communities, ideologies shape what principals and teachers believe and how they practice. In a caring school community, students are not clients or customers. A stewardship for others is called for, where adults have a personal stake in the academic and social welfare of each student. It requires that love and belonging not be conditional but that children are loved and accepted for who they are and who and what they might become. Adults should bring a collective orientation to the community, placing the common good over their own particular interests (1993, pp. 102-104).

Roland Barth maintains that what needs to be improved in schools is the culture so as to emphasize the quality of interpersonal relationships and the quality of learning (1990, p. 45). As educators, if we look to improve these relationships and consider the collective goals of the school community, then an ethic of caring

should guide us in our thoughts and actions. We should remember to ask ourselves, "What effect will this have on the person I teach? What effect will it have on the caring community we are trying to build?" ( Noddings, 1992, p.146)

Sergiovanni contends that the challenge for leadership is that it should change from management and control to stewardship and service. I maintain that it is important to consider leadership from a feminist perspective and from an ethic of care. Jill Blackmore's work,""Educational Leadership: A Feminist Critique and Reconstruction" (1989), encourages the rethinking of our understanding of leadership as something other than a male construct, that is an alternative to a linear way of thinking, hierarchical, and bureaucratic. Instead, leadership can reflect " ... communitarian and collective activities and values" (p. 25).

Recent studies about women in administrative and leadership positions discuss the strengths women bring to these positions. My own research data also points to some interesting possibilities and further questions about women in leadership positions. Perhaps in schools this strength is attending to pedagogy, that is to the care of children, more than to the "management" of people and business. Studies also suggest that women tend to nurture relationships, include as many people as possible in making decisions, and build consensus among people (Young et al., 1992). I found little acknowledgment of feminist research in Sergiovanni's work on community building. It seems to me that he is working from the premise that his ideas are new, giving little recognition to the research that shows women's' strengths and successes. It is

important, therefore, to collect vignettes about women leaders, to consider these stories from feminist perspectives. Women's work requires interpretation from women's perspectives. What it means to be a woman leader and her way of leading may run counter to generalized, traditional notions of leadership.

My study of a particular woman leader, at a particular time and place, helps give voice to unexplored silences in women's experiences. In the next chapter you meet Rose and hear her story.

## Chapter 3

## ROSE'S STORY

In trying to understand what it means to be a caring educational leader, I felt that it was important to first "get to know" a practicing leader who seemed to exemplify caring in her work: Rose seemed to be that kind of leader. To learn from her, I wanted to listen to her life story and understand her history as an educational leader. I hoped that by learning a little about Rose's background I might discover why education is now her vocation. I wanted to find out why she took a leadership position in the school district and see how she developed her thoughts and philosophy of education.

### Her History

Rose described her life history to me during a taped interview. I wish to share this with you without the interruption of my voice or analysis. What follows are excerpts from Rose's story, told in her own voice - her history, beliefs and educational philosophy.

### Pre-teacher Beginnings

> I was born in the Maritimes and I am an only child. I had a really good family life, well integrated. I was adopted when I was six weeks of age, brought into a family where the parents really wanted a child. I grew up in a loving relationship with my mother and father. So that was really good. Our house was always the house where everybody came. I had the clubhouse in the basement, I had a clubhouse in the backyard and my dad took everybody swimming after work.

So, it was an extended family in that sense, they always made certain that I wasn't just like an only child being brought up in an adult world.

I was successful in school. I don't know where or at what point I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I think it was mostly my parents actually. I always knew I would go to university. It was understood that when school was over, university would be next. I think that at that time in the Maritimes a lot of women went into education or social work. It was just the thing to do. I don't think I went into it with any kind of great vision of being a great teacher or anything like that. I think I went into it naively. In fact, my first year in education I was going to switch over and become a secretary. It was too difficult. I think it was just the transition from high school to university, that was a big transition.

**Her Beginnings as an Educator**

I went into education, taught my first year in Halifax with gifted kids. Loved it, but ended up getting married and coming out west. So I quit teaching. I taught that one year and then I stayed at home for about five years and had my family, four kids. There came a point where we wanted to buy a house, my husband and I, but rents were going up, and up and up. There was no way we could afford it on one salary so I decided that I would **HAVE** to go back to teaching for one year. I didn't really want to. It was a real sacrifice for me to have to do it. Once I got into it the light dawned. It was kind of like.... I can remember saying to my husband in April that there is no way I can resign. It was (pause) I don't know. I don't think that when I was at home I knew what I was missing. I'm quite confident that if I hadn't gone back that one year I may never have gone back to school. I may have stayed out of it. But when I went back that one year out of necessity I fell in love with it immediately. I didn't fall in love with it my first year. I liked it but I never... When I look back on that

year I think it was a really good year and I had a wonderful class but I didn't have any passion about teaching. But when I went back to it after being at home for about five years and worked at an inner city school I just fell in love with it, with the whole socialization aspect, with teachers, working with kids. From that point on, I just never looked back.

**Becoming an Administrator**

I don't think I was ever interested in administration but some of my friends thought that I should be. Two people encouraged me, one was a vice principal and another was a friend. The vice principal said to me, "Rose, with all the work you do in the school you might as well get paid for it, you should be an administrator." I brushed that off. He never said much more than that but it was the first spark.

I had been teaching for about six years and then I went into junior high. A good friend of mine, who is now a principal, was a facilitator of Christian family life in the school and I was a trainee. I was being given some extra time to develop skills in this area. She said to me, "You should be applying for administration." She phoned central office and had an assistant principalship application form sent out in my name. Then she laid it down in front of me and said fill it out. She really talked me into it. So I applied, never dreaming that I would get anything. In fact, I didn't get a position right away. Over that particular summer they phoned me up and asked if I would take a vice principalship in a school. That's how I started.

The first two or three months that I was in the elementary school I was kind of depressed about it because I had just started junior high. I was really loving it and I told the kids I would be back. I really loved junior high but anyway there I was in my vice principalship. It was an acting position for one year. Then they moved me to another school where I had what they call a permanent position as an assistant. In both of those schools, I had a good experience but

I didn't have the freedom to do what I wanted to do. I still had somebody else saying, wellllll... you know, holding me back. So I thought, "I'm just going to apply for a principalship. The only way I'm going to do what I really want to do is to be the principal then I can be the one to initiate things. I can be the one to try and get it going and not have the roadblocks put on me." So I tried for a principalship. After two years, I got a principalship in a very small school, the smallest school in the district. And I loved it. I was there for three years, two years and at the end of my second year I was in the planning stages for this one. I had a year to move out of that school and open this one. So, (pause) and it kind of came, it all came very quickly. I love it, I've always loved it. Sometimes people don't understand that. You know people will say to me, but do you have anything outside of education? I don't really have a lot of other interests. I read a lot and not all educational stuff but I'm really motivated by what I do. A lot of my strokes I suppose come from job related things. Like last week-end I went down to Red Deer to a retreat for principals, to me that's like my golf game. You know, I really enjoy doing that. It's a people thing, it's interacting, it's helping, it's getting something creative together that's going to make a difference and I like that. So that's my outlet.

**Her Philosophy and Beliefs**

During the time I spent with Rose I had many opportunities to hear her speak about her beliefs and also observe her practice. The following excerpts are taken from a presentation given by Rose to colleagues at a curriculum workshop. They articulate the beliefs that I observed Rose enacting daily at school and will provide the basis for my understanding of her leadership.

## The Need for a Strong Philosophy

One of the things that stands out loud and clear about any kind of educational leader, or any kind of leader in any organization is that you must know what you're all about. You must know what it is that you really believe in so that all decisions that are made and all of the things that happen in that organization, are focused on that belief. You really then have to examine your values and what it is you're all about, and what you're trying to accomplish.

## Honouring Human Potential

I'd like you to meet David, a child I worked with my very first year of teaching. David played a very significant role in my life. I don't think I realized it at the time when I worked with him but as years went by David became very significant to me. We had an awards program in the school and at the end of the year three children were selected - top academic student, the child who worked the hardest and I can't remember the third category. I really didn't give it a lot of thought as a first year teacher. David was a child who was very demanding. In fact when I went to that school everybody said to me, "Oh you have that David" and I thought that this child is going to end my career in the first month of teaching. Poor David couldn't do anything that first month of school because I was forever waiting for him to do something destructive. He was a unique child and he's one of those children that we never forget. On the last day of school after the Awards Program was over and David did not win one, he came up to me with these kind of big tears brimming in his eyes and said "Mrs. _____ , I read more books than any other child in this classroom". Those were kind of parting words and off he went. I don't think that I *really* thought about it until much later in my career but his message, I'm sure, is clear to

all of us. He was really telling me that there was something that he was best at but that I didn't place any value in it. I think that's had a really significant impact on me as an educator in that all children, anybody that we work with, whether they are children or adults, want to be valued for their contribution and if we only value certain things some people are left by the wayside.

Out of that story about David came a strong desire to honour human potential. I believe in the organization in which I'm working, that I must find a way as a leader of that organization, to make sure that everybody feels that they are valued and are part of the environment, or part of that organization. I also believe that out of this statement that we need to help people recognize their gifts, and the gifts of others. This must become a very integral part of any organization; that people somehow have the freedom to share their gifts and not feel by doing so that they're showing off or bragging. I like the idea of awarding the "best in everyone" rather than "the best" and now I'm even wondering if that "best" should be in there.

**Humanizing the Environment**

I also believe in humanizing the environment in which we work. I really believe that we need to look at our environment. If we look at our homes, and what we try to put into those, and how much we value them, and then the organization in which we work, I believe the organization has the same need, as do the people who are working there. So whether it is our office or our home space, it needs to be humanized. In some way it needs to speak of us, so that the people who are in that organization have a sense of who they are and where they are going. I really believe that the environment or climate is a very important part of an organization. Our own school is very visually impacting. Sometimes people are overwhelmed by it, but it's not because we just want the school to look nice, or we want it to be pretty, or whatever. It's because we really

want the people in that building to know that they are valued, and the one way to show them that is by displaying what they do. Teachers' work is put up as well as the students', anybody who wants to contribute to the environment.

I also believe that the environment needs to be student centered because we work with children. In doing so, it doesn't just mean that kids are present, but it means that all of the decisions made in the school would have the the child as a focal point.

**Creating a Child Centered Environment**

I also believe that the environment needs to be student centered because we work with children, and in doing so, it doesn't just mean that kids are present, but it means that all of the decisions that are decided in that school would have the focal point of the child or student. It is important to have the children understand the whole idea of faith in the sense of affirming, that we are there to affirm one another. If teachers are discouraged, if kids are discouraged, that somehow we always bring to them the sense that we have faith in them and that we believe in them no matter what is happening. That's a really important part of what we do when we work with people, that there's always a sense of hope, that we never leave students with a feeling that it's a hopeless situation, and that they can never go forward; that there is no light at the end of the tunnel for them. The same with staff, when things aren't going well, that somehow we have to say to kids, "I forgive you" but we demonstrate that forgiveness by dealing with the situation, forgetting about it, and going forward. We don't have to write it down in a little black book and bring it up every time the student comes down to the office. I think people, leaders have to say, "Do I really forgive or do I keep it on record to go back and look at it time and time again?"

**Building Communities**

> I also believe in building communities, that community in the classroom or that community in the whole school. To build that community it has to be very focused and people really have to know where they are going. What I believe is that we must move the "I" to "We" so that it becomes something that the whole community works together on. To move from that "I" to that "We," we had every person in our school write an "I statement" *(their I believe ....)* and then join it together in small groups, and large groups, and so on until we got a "We Statement." There is a strong sense of vision in terms of what we are doing. I can remember as a classroom teacher for years working in schools where everybody just kind of did their own thing in their own space. You looked after your own class but we never really had that kind of unity that we were working together.

**Biography, Caring and Leadership**

Rose's story lets us meet Rose the person, the educational leader. Her own words give us a picture of who she is, what she values, and how she approaches life. Educators are people and you cannot understand the educator or educational leader without understanding the person. As Fullan and Hargreaves emphasize, "Teaching is bound up with their lives, their biographies, with the kinds of people they have become (1991, p. 25) .

As my description of Rose's work and her explanations of her own life and work suggest, caring is something integrally related to her own being and personhood. Rather than technique or administrative method applied in dispassionate ways, caring is the action of a person who relates with a sense of moral responsibility to others. Rose's story, related in her own words, offers

possibilities for considering the importance of caring in leadership. Developing a strong philosophy, honouring human potential, humanizing the environment, creating a child centered environment, and building a school community are themes that will be revisited as they provide a way for exploring further the meaning of caring educational leadership.

## Chapter 4

## CARING AND COMMUNITY

As I lived with the question of "what it means to be a caring educational leader" I read and reread my field notes and interviews with Rose, underlining key words and phrases. I wanted to explore Rose's beliefs and practices as an educational leader from the perspective of care and justice. I found, however, that using the perspective of care was too narrow and that it did not really acknowledge the life and work of individuals in the school. It was only when I began to consider the culture of the school and the importance of community building that I could begin to make sense of the information I had gathered. I believe that it is important to think about culture, community building and caring leadership as interrelated qualities. Although Rose's values and how these were expressed in her actions and words showed caring, that also could not be separated from how the culture of the school and her efforts of community building were intertwined. Through Rose's stories, my observations of her practice, and my observation of interactions and activities of people in the school, we see Rose as a caring leader.

Before exploring further the relationship between care, culture, and community, I want to highlight some qualities of leadership which I believe demonstrates how the ethic of care can be intrinsic to being an educational leader. In the previous chapter Rose articulated the need for a strong personal philosophy "so that everything that happens, what you're trying to accomplish comes

about. Her own strong beliefs of honouring human potential and humanizing the environment have children at the heart of all her actions and are demonstrated in caring ways.

### Caring for Others

> The one-caring, in caring, is present in her acts of caring. Even in physical absence, acts at a distance bear the signs of presence: engrossment in the other, regard, desire for the other's well-being.
>
> Noddings, *Caring*, 1984.

Many school administrators see office duties, budget preparation, and other bureaucratic details as their primary responsibilities. I found that Rose saw her role differently. As I interpret Noddings' ideas I believe that Rose was attentive to, "engrossed in" others, desired their well-being, and as will be shown in my analysis, took time to care. More than the common sense notion of caring though, Rose manifested Noddings' notion of caring. This caring is shown towards staff, students, other individuals, the school environment and decision-making. It is reflected in the work of Rose.

### Care is Shown in the Way People Inhabit Space

As you enter Maple School the visual impact is overwhelming, yet welcoming. Rose believes that the school environment must represent the individuals who work in the school - adults and children alike. Rose believes that the school should be a little like home. Rose states, "I believe the organization ... needs to be humanized. In some way, it needs to speak of us." Rose cares that

all people who come into the school feel that they are a part of the school and that they can express themselves freely. Though some children or adults who come into the school may come from a home environment that is different compared to Maple's, Rose believes that the school environment should show that everyone is valued.

Witold Rybczynski, in his book *The Most Beautiful House in the World* (1989), offers insights into "the joys of installing ourselves in a place, of establishing a spot where it would be safe to dream" (p. jacket cover). Though the idea of home can also elicit negative connotations, for example, oppression and violence, or of the idealized family and home seen on television, the idea or definition of home developed by Rybczynski helps us to understand home as a place where individuals feel pride, security and peace.

> There are pictures of the children in communion dress and of movie stars, and a magazine cover depicting Vicente Guerrero, a hero of the war of independence. A Christmas*pinata* hangs from the ceiling. The sofa and easy chairs are covered in improbable Scottish plaids. Although there are no coats of arms or excutcheons here, on one of the concrete posts, beneath the roughly marked house number, is a carefully painted figure of a little cat.
>
> The house - most people would call it a shack - is not without artistry. Its long porch faces west; and to control the relentless sun, the side facing the street has been completely filled with creepers, ferns, flowers, and many types of herbs- *yerba buena* (for making tea), *hjepazote*, and cilantro. .....
>
> It (the house) exhibits something equally precious: the moving loveliness of human occupation, of a place transformed.
>
> (1989, pp. 188-189)

I share this long excerpt with you as a comparison to Maple School where Rose is principal. Like Rybczynski's description of home, Rose's school does not present itself as a cold sterile

environment but as a real place where people live and work and interact with one another. This transformation from an institution-like place to that of home-like environment cannot and does not occur magically. Rose and the people in the school create this home away from home. The consideration given to creating the details of the family home in Rybczynski's book are similar to the consideration given to creating Maple school. The following description of Maple School is taken from my notes.

> Maple School has a homey comfortable atmosphere. The school foyer entrance has a welcome sign in many languages. There are rainbows and prisms, symbols of importance to the school, hung in the main office, Rose's office, the hallways and the staffroom. The venetian blinds in the staffroom are in rainbow colours. Plants and freshly cut flowers are found in the office, staffroom and elsewhere throughout the school. Inspirational messages and belief statements decorate the walls in the staffroom. In the hallways, children's paintings are hung in metal frames. Bulletin boards and walls are covered with children's work and with colorful posters offering thoughtful messages to those who read them. Also in the hallways, outside classroom doors are small tables set up with literature books, science or reading activities or computer centres. (These are activities that children are trusted to do outside the rooms.)
>
> The library is another place where children and adults can feel at home. One corner of the room is decorated for younger children. Pictures of animals and fairy tale characters cover the walls. Books are within a young child's grasp and there are many small cozy sitting areas with pillows. The older children and teens have their area too, set apart from the other areas. Their sitting area has two

couches, two large arm chairs and a lace covered coffee table. It's also a welcoming and comfortable area.

Down the hall from the office and opposite the entrance is a waiting area. Here children can wait for their parents or care-giver, parents wait for their children, or friends can sit and talk. There are two comfortable stuffed chairs and a small coffee table. On the table is a large plant, a statue of the Blessed Virgin and other knick-knacks. Framed pictures of Christmas concerts past hang on adjacent walls as do ceramic tiles made by children. The ceiling tiles here and elsewhere in the hallways and classrooms have been painted by departing grade nine students. These paintings are seen as works of art and give a sense of pride and ownership to the students. A large wooden sculpture, given to the school by a parent, completes the furnishing for this area.

The office and adjacent sitting area are found to be as welcoming, with couches, comfortable chairs, and tables covered with magazines and books. A small table and two chairs are available for children. This children's table has a display of children's picture books, small toys, and a plant. Against one wall is a bookshelf filled to overflowing with books for parents, children, and visitors. There is an immense collection. Many of these books belong to Rose and may be borrowed from her.

Rose's office door is marked with her name and a sign that says "Principals Love Kids." Her office desk does not act as a barrier or an imposing structure as it is up against the wall. When she is speaking with someone she can easily swivel her chair round to be facing a circular sitting arrangement. Comfortable arm chairs and a coffee table are also part of her office arrangement. The walls and bulletin boards are covered with memorabilia, words of wisdom and art work. More books crowd her office shelves and are displayed on a table. She is most anxious to share these with you.

Rose and her staff have worked together to make this school a special place for people, where one can relax, talk to others, or read while waiting for someone. Rose told me that she enjoys finding posters, decorative carvings with inspirational messages, or baskets with dried flowers to decorate the school during her weekend shopping trips. When I was at the school early one morning I noticed that the secretary brought in flowers from her garden to put on the office counter. She mentioned that the flowers brought the outside into the school. The librarian shared with me the reason she organized the library in the manner she did. She believed that young children as well as teens needed a comfortable place where they could read and work or just be with their friends. The lace table cloth was from her home. These are all examples of how Rose and her staff take time to create a space where individuals' physical and emotional needs are considered. Rose encourages everyone to make their space special, to let it speak of them. I felt very comfortable in the school. More importantly, it was reassuring to see children seated in cozy chairs while waiting for their parents instead of standing by the door in the bootroom with nowhere to put their things. This concern and care for detail is indicative of the respect shown for the people in the school.

I believe that the space created by Rose and Maple School staff is more than just a physical space. It is indicative of an ethic of care at work. First of all, a great deal of time and effort is put into creating such a place, indicating commitment and interest. Rose strives to encourage a comfortable, welcoming space. The efforts to create a home-like space seem to say to children, "We trust and

value you. We believe that you deserve to be treated with respect." These are just and caring actions and indeed have important pedagogic qualities and consequences. The physical space, therefore, expresses a commitment and responsibility, a consideration for others implicit in the notion of caring.

The material aspects of the school are only one part of creating a space and atmosphere where it is obvious that people have cared enough to transform it into a home. As I have tried to show above, the home-like quality of the school depends on human actions and human relationships guided by care and justice. The quality of how people create space and human relations also creates an atmosphere conducive to building a positive school culture and community. However, there is something intangible about atmosphere. It is difficult to describe why, as you walk into some schools, you feel very welcome yet in others you are met with a feeling of unease. Maple School is welcoming from the minute you enter. It is not just because of the school's physical appearance but also because of the way people greeted me that I could tell there was a difference. Staff and students spoke to me, gave directions and smiled. I was offered reading material and a place to sit while I waited. As I waited, I was included in casual conversations. Others who came into the office, students and parents alike, were greeted in a similar fashion. Warm words of greeting or well wishes were passed out. There were smiles and laughter. The expressions on people's faces exuded happiness and pleasure at being in the school. The human touch was comforting.

Students and visitors are not the only ones who receive this treatment. Rose encourages and organizes times when people can meet and get to know their colleagues on staff. She feels that it is important to create this kind of atmosphere so that people will then feel more comfortable in sharing their gifts and talents. Rose hopes that by creating a caring atmosphere individuals will feel freer to take risks, challenge themselves, and see opportunities for growth as educators.

As Rose spoke about a Valentine's Day celebration and the school and staff events on this day, she repeated the phrase, "it was a very special day." Rose shared her views with me, "It was very special. It is part of the culture of the school, a caring environment. You can feel the closeness and the time is provided for these activities." The staff function is comparable to an extended family social. There was food and refreshments. Staff members sang love songs and played musical instruments. It sounds "kind of corny" but I was present for a similar celebration on another day and can confirm this "very special feeling of closeness." This kind of event happens because Rose feels that it is important to build this time into a busy schedule: to create an atmosphere where people can share with one another. Students are dismissed early every Thursday in order to provide time for staff development and on special occasions, for staff celebrations. These staff development days may be used to discuss current school board directives, new curriculum strategies, or as of much importance to Rose and her staff, to spend time together singing and talking.

Thus, humanizing the environment, creating a caring, respectful space and atmosphere where people work is important to Rose. "LOVE IS SPOKEN HERE" is not just a slogan on a sign outside the office. The words only highlight caring as experienced in the day to day life of the school.

**Caring is Intrinsically Pedagogic**

A school's responsibility and purpose is of course the education of the children in the school. However, what does it mean to have children at the centre of all we do? What are the qualities of an educational leader who demonstrates care and justice in her approach with children? How does an educational leader respond to children and lead them to be caring people? Rose described to me her feelings about children, "In a school, a child's potential needs to be acknowledged and celebrated. Everything we do should be a celebration of children. I don't believe in teachers screaming at the kids and that's part of the culture of the school, that you wouldn't see teachers putting kids down."

The concern for children is shown in the ways the staff has focused over the years on the question of how to make the school a safe place for children. Rose feels that this is important, but it places a special onus on the educational leader to model the way children should be treated by adults. "I think the modeling that goes on, the hugging, it's all part and parcel of how you treat kids and if the administrator treats children this way, then teachers will too."

This kind of relationship to and concern for children also extends to the way space is constructed and used in the school.

There is ample consideration for the safety and security for children in the classrooms and hallways, for example. The same caring applies to adults' space as well. I noted that the physical surroundings where people work were deemed important as exemplified in the way Rose and her staff spend time together planning for the staffroom to make it a special place. Rose believes that people should be encouraged to take ownership of their spaces and feel comfortable as well as appreciated. In the case of the staffroom, it may be a place for adults yet children are a focus here also, showing that the use of space is guided by pedagogic interests. Rose asserted, "If you want the staffroom to be a place that is nurturing for kids and nurturing for teachers, then there has to be a sense of respect; so that kids' lives are not laid out on the tables to be dissected, nor are teachers." Statements and matching actions such as these that I heard and consequent actions I observed in the school made me believe that Rose and her staff really did care about children and treated them with care and responsibility.

The sense of caring for students' experiences extended also to the junior high students. Maple School's junior high students did not participate in the interschool sports program. After much discussion the staff decided that the interschool program was expensive and did not allow enough students to participate. They felt that the competitive nature of the sports program was detrimental to children and they opted for a school program that involved all the junior high students who wanted to participate. More students had an opportunity to receive coaching and develop skills that could later be used at the high school. The staff's goal

was to develop everyone's potential and celebrate everyone's learning. In today's competitive world Maple was seen as an anomaly; however, the staff believed a more cooperative approach to teaching sports and acquiring life-long recreational habits was more important. They met with some criticism but stayed with their goal. Rose explains why they did so, "There is so much we do but the child is at the heart of it all. Everything that happens at the school has the child at the heart of it."

A leader guided by the notion of care, as in the example of Rose, shows how that care is manifested in pedagogic concern and responsibility for children.

**Care is Being There for Others**

During my many opportunities to observe Rose with staff and students, I was appreciative of the time she took to be with the staff discussing family events, holiday plans or classroom events. A busy administrator might be found at her desk completing letters or planning for a parent presentation, but Rose was with her staff in myriad and consistent ways. Her presence with and for others was evident. Insistent bureaucratic tasks did not hinder her. From my field notes taken during a shadowing exercise, I was able to record many instances to show that Rose was caring for others.

In the staff room, Rose asked the kindergarten teacher about a cooking project for the class that day. She talked to another teacher about skiing and had time to discuss the ski conditions with him. When I questioned Rose about her time talking about the cooking event, she did not recall this happening. It was something

she did almost naturally rather than methodically or procedurally. Can caring be so automatic, so apparently effortless?

Students, too, know that Rose is present and available to them. They do not seem to be threatened by her and they readily ask for her assistance. As I followed her throughout the school, I noted that she took time to assist students who had problems. For a group of students who could not locate the school's computers, she gave advice as to where they could look and made an announcement herself on the intercom to try to help them. She warmly greeted students in the hallway by giving a pat on the back, a kind word or questions as to how they were doing. Ann, a junior high student, waited for Rose. Rose put her arm around the girl's shoulder and they walked down the hallway together. They talked about the Valentine's dance and other things. Rose explained, "I like to spend time with her; check in with her. I'm conscious of her being there and I speak to her. I try to notice her and try to build up her self-esteem. This is a special effort to try to speak to the kids in the hall." With over six hundred students in the school, Rose finds a few moments to attend to those special details of caring. Rose stated that she was aware of the fact that some individuals needed her caring and she wanted to be there for them.

This consideration and thoughtfulness is also shown towards other adults. Rose jokingly greeted a woman who was washing pots in the staffroom as "our special Cinderella". This woman, who was diligently scrubbing the pots, laughed and joked in return. When the Native counselor arrived, Rose greeted her and acknowledged the excellent work she does in the school, "Hi. I've heard of all kinds of

wonderful things about yesterday." Rose shared this with me, "I know her well and I was re-establishing a connection. I wanted to make her feel more comfortable and be sensitive to her being here." Once again Rose is conscious of how individuals should be treated, with care and consideration. This can be supported by Noddings.

> " The one-caring is sufficiently engrossed in the other to listen to him and to take pleasure or pain in what he recounts. Whatever she does for the cared-for is embedded in a relationship that reveals itself as engrossment and in an attitude that warms and comforts the cared-for."
> (1984, p. 19)

As Noddings states, it is important for the cared-for person to be heard and acknowledged. On several occasions, when Rose was otherwise occupied, she took time and stopped to listen and discuss issues of importance with staff members. When the custodian stopped her to talk about a problem with another custodial staff person, she did not rebuff him but allowed him to vent his frustrations and offered some assistance. From my field notes I write, "Rose stops and listens carefully to the custodian. She appears to be in no rush and waits as he describes his frustrations. She nods her head and actively listens to him." She suggests that he stop by her office later so that they could sort out the problem.

The physical education teacher is organizing a ski trip for grades 7, 8 and 9. The grade 9 students seem reluctant to sign up and he is not able to finalize arrangements. He is "ticked off" with the students and vents his frustration to Rose as she is visiting with the Native Education Counselor in the staffroom. She takes time to discuss this question with him. "What should we do? What's your gut feeling? Do you want to keep the grade 9's back and have

the 7's and 8's go?" Rose does not make the decision for the teacher; it will be something he has to think about and then come up with a solution. "Check it out and touch base again." This decision requires more thought and exploration. There will also be more than one person deciding the fate of the ski trip. It may take some careful discussion before the decision is made. Rose will be there to offer her support.

How decisions are made, whether instantaneously or with lengthy deliberation, thoughtfulness and tact towards others, shows a caring nature. Tact, as van Manen has suggested, means in part, knowing instinctively what to say when in certain situations (1988). During a half hour shadowing tour with Rose I found that she was required to make at least twenty decisions in a space of 30 minutes. Some of these were very minor - the students requiring help. Others were crucial decisions - how to handle a custodial staff problem. Rose took care in responding to all of these questions, listening to the individuals, and acting with a regard for them.

Many requests came from students that required prompt attention. Two students came to inform her that there was no substitute teacher for their class. Her quick reaction was to check with her secretary and then go down to the classroom to insure that all was well. She made sure that a teacher would look in on the students until someone did arrive. The students were treated with respect. Rose informed them that a substitute teacher was on the way and that they could get ready. She asked them questions about the Valentine's dance and when they were settled she leaves them. In this instance when students came to her with a problem, she dealt

with it quickly to stop any potential problem, but did so in a tactful way. She also exhibited a trust in the junior high students when she left them to get ready on their own - something not many individuals working with teenagers might do.

The custodian had a problem with a new staff person which he felt was serious. Rose also felt this could be a potential difficulty as the new custodian wanted to run the school. The school staff had an established way of solving problems and this new person was not yet in tune with the operation of the school. "We've always talked to the kids and teachers and tried to work things out. It is our way and we will have to discuss this. . . . The problem is that we have to find a way to move the new man forward without killing his enthusiasm." Some administrators would not care to spend the time discussing this difficulty with staff in such detail, yet Rose finds that her way has been successful in the past and that she is prepared to meet with those concerned to deal with the problem. She takes time and care in listening to the people concerned in order to study the problem. Rose, not hidden away in her office, is attending to those special details of caring. Rose told me that this attention to details does happen unconsciously but often she was aware of the fact that some individuals needed her caring and she wanted to be there for them.

Is there evidence that a combination of care and justice is being shown to others when Rose is there for them? As I think about my observations, I often feel confusion because I believe that many things are occurring and it is difficult to separate these. Shogan argued that if there are no conflicts to adjudicate, then the focus of

an ethic of care is the consideration for the well being of the other. In many of Rose's encounters, adjudication was not necessary; however, there often seemed to be a solicitude for others. The other is uppermost in her decision making. Also in Rose's conversations, I hear her speak about what is valued by the school and how it is important to include these thoughts. What I have observed is a caring, just woman who exemplifies those ethics not only in her relationships with others but in the very organization and space in the school. Caring is part of the school culture and Rose's words and actions reinforce the importance of care to all members of the school community.

**Caring Cultivates the Culture of Community**

Caring is more than a nice feeling or the good things we do for others. It is an ethical response to the other. Genuine caring allows the community to emerge. As individuals experience this care, they feel accepted and believe they will be treated fairly. The actions of the caring person create a sense of trust. Relationships develop and there is a sense of reciprocity. Again I think about Noddings' notion of caring, that one must be open to the cared-for. Noddings' descriptions of how a caring act may occur is helpful for interpreting any caring encounter. As a caring person, I must be attentive to the other: hear, see and feel what the other tries to express. This engrossment (attention) may last only a short time and it may or may not happen again. Noddings gives an example of a stranger who asks for directions. A caring encounter and a brief caring relation would occur if the person who receives the request

listens attentively to the stranger's request and then responds in such a way that the stranger receives and recognizes the assistance. The caring relation is accomplished when the stranger receives the efforts at caring. A caring response furthers the other. It is our attention to the other and how the other receives, recognizes and responds to caring that completes a caring act. "Caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors." (1992, p.17)

We are not speaking about strangers at Maple School but I believe that it is important to think about the attention shown towards others and their response, in order to help clarify why caring actions cultivate and nurture a community in the school. Rose's openness 'to' and caring 'for' others causes others to respond, therefore completing the caring actions. It is the respect for the other and encouragement to accept responsibility and commitment that promotes the idea of community in the school. Rose confirms this when she states, "I think the message is clear and it's something I share with my staff: the school is together, the organization is together, it may not be perfect but it's ours." It is not Rose, alone, building a community but the actions of all the individuals acting together. It is the "ours" that makes a community.

A presentation given by Rose titled, "The Role of the Principal in Building a Strong School Culture" provided me with an opportunity to capture a picture of this educational leader in a public address to colleagues and friends. She explained that as she prepared for her presentation she reviewed literature about culture and tried to come to a better understanding of the meaning of culture in a school. As Rose combed the research she began to understand more clearly what

had been happening in Maple School over the years to develop a school culture and community. She found that the history, the focus on values and beliefs, the stories and myths about the school, the heroines and heroes, the symbols, the rituals and celebrations all contributed to what Maple School is. I believe that it is also important to recognize that Rose and many of the staff members have been in the school for ten years. Caring communities do not grow overnight but as they do become rooted, the culture of the organization becomes more visible. It is the people who are the community and their actions that create the culture. Rose thinks that "it is a shared responsibility in terms of developing that culture in the school."

From the knowledge gained through her own research, Rose now believes that it is important for leaders to bring the symbolic elements of the culture to a conscious level so that people "truly get a grasp of what they are about."

**Shared Symbols of the Community**

Symbols play an important part of the work place because - for Rose - these symbols not only remind people of their shared beliefs but also encourage them to move in a certain direction. In Maple School, the prism and rainbow are prominent symbols and they took on meaning for everyone in the school through staff and student activities. The prism reflects light. Light can be a symbol of understanding and insight: "seeing the light." Rose believes that using this symbol can help people see their own strengths and gifts which they have to share with others. Light also reflects a rainbow.

For the students and staff at Maple School the rainbow is a symbol of promise, of hope and of the beauty reflected in all. As a multicultural school, it has come to mean over the years, "that we are one with all the colours of the world." These symbols have become central to many of the displays in the school.

A visible symbol in the staff room is the statement in wood letters "Together We Are Strong" decorated with paper chains. Every staff member contributes to the building of the chain by drawing a symbol of the gift or a strength they bring to the school. All the staff members then link their parts of the chain to make one strong chain that is hung around the room. Rose describes the purpose, "People don't have to share it. The purpose is not to share it; the purpose is to have people think about their own gifts and their own strengths, and have it in the staff room where it is on the wall as a symbol of our strength and unity together, which I believe contributes to the culture. That's tradition in our school now, we do that every single year." The chain has become a symbol of power that a community has when they strive for similar goals.

This sharing and renewal each year fulfills one of Rose's basic philosophical beliefs, that is, honouring human potential. Not only does this activity honour human potential but it respects and recognizes people's strengths and gifts. It is time devoted to the people in the community. The individual's strength or gift is not the focus but it is the unity and power they have when all strengths and gifts are put together. The shared symbols in the school bring the community together and remind everyone of what is valued. Story

telling is another way a caring community can share and support each other in the school.

**Story Telling Nurtures the Community's Culture**

Rose believes that the kinds of stories told in the staffroom reflect what's really valued in the school, are a way of sharing acts of kindness, and celebrate the heroines and heroes in the school community. Stories talk about the people in the school, are based on true events, and are frequently shared over and over. They reflect what is meaningful to people in the school and keep the values alive. "They're often told to new members to bring them on board. They provide a shared understanding." Rose maintains that heroines and heroes need to be celebrated and their stories need to be told. She talks about how teachers and other staff members care more about the children than their own personal gains. As she puts it,

> There are many ways that kids can be heroes and heroines too. It's not always the kid who is that excellent role model, but it's the one who comes and knocks or kicks a hole in the wall or does something that really pushes you to bring out the best of you in yourself. The kid who really torments us in a sense pushes us to a new level of humanity.

During the presentation to colleagues Rose models and illustrates the importance of stories to the community in reaffirming the way things are done in the school by sharing with us some of the stories that have pushed staff to new levels of humanity. She begins with a story about Trevor.

> Trevor was a grade nine student who came to Maple School in October or November. The highest mark on his report

> card was twenty percent. Rose came to the staff about it and told them how concerned she was about this teen. The staff became involved immediately with the feeling that "we are going to give this boy a sense of security, so we're going to put something together." The whole staff focused on this one boy who really struggled throughout the year, yet because of the support and feeling of success he was somehow transformed. Rose says, "Teachers tell this going over and over again in our school because it really shows the value that we place in kids and what they were doing."

This is clearly an example of community members coming together to show that they care and this caring is revealed by their actions. They wanted the boy to be secure and worked together to make this happen.

John and Pat are heroic and Rose tells their stories. John is the custodian at the school and helps a junior high student with a heart condition. Pat is a teacher in the school and acts as an advocate for a troubled boy. The final story is a moral dilemma that caused Rose to re-examine her beliefs.

> The custodian is another individual who really shared the values of our staff. There was a little boy in our school who was really rejected by others in Junior High. I found out about three or four months into the year that the custodian had been taking him fishing on the weekend. Here is a man who never really told anybody anything, but he was a very strong part of that culture in our school. He saw value in that boy and he also saw the rejection that boy was suffering. We tell the story to our staff about John because again we are reinforcing values that we really believe in.

> Lance was a boy who attended our school who is an example of someone who could push you. He was one of those

kids that every teacher knows on the first day. In fact, when our school opened years ago Lance came with a hammer was chipping away at the bricks on this brand new school that everyone was so proud of. He continued to do those kinds of things for quite a long time. We had a teacher on our staff, Pat. She never gave up on anybody. She saw the positive in the child who was driving everybody crazy. She would always see the positive. She was a real advocate for Lance. When Lance's mother came in for an interview, Pat told the mother all the beautiful things about Lance and this mother just wept in Pat's office. The mother said " My son has been in school for six years and this is the first time anybody has ever said anything positive about him." So that is the story that we tell because it really reflects the values in our school - that we really believe there is something unique in each individual and we have to find it, and Pat taught us that.

Stuart was a student who came to us in Grade 7 and he challenged my values. He really shook my foundation. It was at a time when we were really worried about Departmental results. I was really caught up in it because there was much more emphasis on it perhaps than there is today. This boy came in to register in Grade 7. He was from outside of our District. His mother had phoned up and said this boy is being eaten alive in a very large Junior High, a very good Junior High actually but maybe too big for her son. The boy had acne and big thick glasses and really what other kids might call a nerd. Anyway, the mother came down with Stuart and she handed me his report card. On his report card he didn't have a mark higher than 15 or 20 percent. It flashed through my mind at that moment, if I accept this kid in the school when he's in Grade 9 he's going to bring down the school average. Like it went through my mind, like it was there. If he had had 95 percent I wouldn't have questioned it, but he had 15 percent and my mind, it brought me to a stop. I'm really glad that it did, I'm really glad that it happened. Of course Stuart did come to our

> school and he was one of the more beautiful kids that we've probably ever brought in. He brought more to us I believe than we brought to him. He discovered the gift of music and he was one of those kids that everybody is drawn to. He never knew what I felt at the moment but I'll never forget that because I think of us as leaders that when we have values and beliefs they are going to be challenged. We can move in the wrong direction just like that, ( she snaps her fingers) so quickly and we throw away everything that we really believe in.

These stories are told to acknowledge the members of the community who are committed to caring about others in the school. They take responsibility for others and Rose takes every opportunity she can to share these stories with others. These stories celebrate individuals. Celebrations for the entire school community provide an opportunity for all members of the community, adults and children, to share, learn and enjoy the event.

**Celebrating Community**

Rose thinks that it is important "to find something to celebrate every day and to get people to focus on that idea of celebrating." I had an opportunity to observe a celebration in the gymnasium before the children left for Easter holidays. All six hundred students from kindergarten to grade nine participated. I was overwhelmed by the level of participation, excitement and closeness that filled the gymnasium. It left me feeling exhilarated.

I spoke to Rose about this day because it had such an impact on me. Rose told me that it evolved from a staff development meeting. She began the meeting by reading a book to the staff, a child's story

about racial discrimination. The story led to a discussion about support for a Human Rights Day. A guest speaker had been asked to attend but the staff wanted to do something special. Rose described how one of the teachers said, "I have this dream of having the two hundred and fifty junior high kids up in the gym and circling all the elementary students and dancing to a special song." Rose's thought was, "If this is his dream we will try and make it work." Other staff members joined in and soon a drama component was added. Songs were to be learnt. A friendship paper chain would link all students and staff together in the gymnasium. Banners proclaiming human rights would be made by the students and hung throughout the school.

Rose wasn't sure if it would work but was willing to take the risk with the rest of the staff and her comment about the day sums up my feelings as well, "I thought it was phenomenal!" We weren't the only ones to feel this way. A substitute teacher at the school for the celebration sent this note to the school.

> "Reflective, inspiring, uniting, meaningful, spiritual, joyful, respectful, warm, tolerance and understanding. I was very impressed with the multicultural celebration. There was a wonderful blend of teacher and student talents and participation. The atmosphere was warm. The fellowship was very evident. Congratulations."

As a witness to this celebration, I can attest to the fact that the success of this celebration is indicative of how a community of people, who share a strong commitment and responsibility to others in the school, work together to make things happen. From the very beginning, individuals were adding their support and time. The drama teacher involved the special needs students in a drama

production in which young people were the victims of discrimination. The teachers taught all students that "special" song, which staff and students sang together. The music teacher, with the assistance of the counselor, helped organize the junior high students in the dance around the gymnasium and from the enthusiastic participation of the students it seemed they enjoyed themselves. The most telling moment of success, from my viewpoint as an observer, was when the music teacher gave the drama teacher, both men, an immense hug before all the students in the gymnasium. The smiles and warm congratulatory expressions shared among the staff and students shows the caring that members in this community feel towards one another.

**Community Promotes a Caring Identity**

In a caring community, people support one another. We have seen from the above stories and celebrations that these are real acts of kindness and caring, or caring actions that required a justice perspective. A symbiotic relationship exists between community and care, for it is a supportive community that encourages and builds on caring actions. Rose described to me how a leader encourages this to happen.

**Enriching the Community Through Personal Philosophies**

In her first couple of years as a leader, Rose believed that everybody had to agree to follow her philosophy and do what she wanted rather then having the staff truly involved in articulating their own personal philosophy or creed. "How does a leader take the

'I believe' and make it into a 'we believe' without just laying it on?" In fact she stated at a presentation to colleagues that in the beginning her creed was only there "in the back of her mind." Rose soon realized that you can't impose your personal ideas on others. "It doesn't work that way, and you could be the only one believing it, and that means nobody else is buying in." She felt that each person's personal 'I believe' statement needed to be talked about and shared with others so that a common philosophy could be established for the school.

Through trial and experimentation Rose and the administrative team developed a way to have staff truly participate in developing a vision for the school through the development of their own personal creed. She describes this process.

> Many haven't really reflected on it (personal creed) and aren't really sure how to get there. We (administrative staff) provided the experience. During a staff development retreat, we had people reflect on a teacher who had touched their life, or a child who had touched their life, an experience in their workplace that had impacted on them, or a symbol that's a value. From these reflections we then had every person in our school write an "I statement" - a statement of what was of importance to them /what they believe as educators. It's hard to get at the heart of what we believe because it's at the unconscious level, but it's there and we need to be consciously aware. The staff then worked in groups of three and then as an entire staff to meld their ideas for the school. The statements created by them have served as the philosophy or the creed for Maple School.
>
> My concern then was how to put the statements into concrete action and we found it difficult to do. How do you get to really live it out in the school? How do you walk it, because

unless you live it out it isn't really happening, it's not really the norm in the school. The philosophy must be the driving force that pulls everything together; so that everyone knows what the values are, where they are going, so that they can really live out what it is that the organization is all about. Once it becomes a 'we' then it really becomes empowering in the organization, builds community and people know where they're going.

Whenever I make a decision or the school makes decisions, we have to look at values whether we are living up to the creed. If we believe in faith, love, hope and forgiveness, then everything that they do must reflect this. With student evaluation as an example, I wonder if this is giving the child hope or are we diminishing the child to 5% as a human being?

What can leaders do? I think we have to start with the 'I' and seriously look at what it is that 'I believe in.' Then it is important to get it written down so that it's concrete. Finally we can re-examine what we believe in and ask ourselves if I believe this ... am I living it?

It is important to think about this last statement for again we have an example of a caring individual. This is not someone who wants to philosophize about how children are treated. She wants to discuss this with staff, decide on how this will happen and then act in a way that supports the philosophy. Sergiovanni claims that "Community can help teachers and students be transformed from a collection of 'I's' to a collective 'we': thus providing them with a unique and enduring sense of identity, belonging, and place." (1993, p. xiii) The collective of 'We' members forms part of tightly knit web of meaningful relationships. The collective usually shares a common place and over time comes to share common sentiments and traditions that are sustaining. In Maple School time was taken to

allow this to happen. My belief is that the people in Maple School became a community and it was the trust and commitment shown in their work, their care for students and each other that confirms this.

As individuals in the school began to work together as a community they began to share a common vision. "It must be shared and it must enrich the human experience. It is going to guide your decisions and give an identity." Rose is always concerned that whatever is done in the school must be good for the individuals. She believes that she is not the only one who can articulate the vision, that people on staff can articulate it as well. The positive outcome of this articulation is the emphasis on the strength of that community "so that people really are focusing on their strengths and their gifts in that organization". Through staff development meetings, time tabling, and extending the community, the school community promotes a caring identity.

**Staff Development Meetings and Time Tabling Support the Growth of a Caring Identity**

Rose has organized the school year to include a staff meeting every week. Students are dismissed an hour earlier on these days. Rose discusses the rationale for this during an interview.

> "We always had staff development in the school. Right from the beginning and because I've always believed that you cannot possibly get a school moving in a certain direction if you only meet once a month. That's only ten meetings a year and there is no way that you can ever get everybody on board unless you make it a high priority. Teachers coming into this

school know that staff development is a strong part of our professional growth.

I think that you have to plan your staff development in such a way that people will begin to get a sense of who they are. It is not just a time for curriculum activities. You look at the development of the whole child inside your classroom, so then you have to look at the development of the whole person on your staff. You have to look at the social and emotional needs, the intellectual, creative and physical needs, and the moral needs. Staff development should be planned around that whole cycle so that teachers aren't just left with one part. I think that staff development to me is one of the most exciting things we do in the school."

On several occasions I was able to be present for staff development days. Rose would begin each session with a poem or quote on the overhead or she would read a story to the staff. She has a love of literature and transfers the lesson, story, or message from the story to the practical application for staff development purposes. The description of the Human Rights Day planning process was just such a day. The community came together to promote a caring activity for the entire school community.

During other meetings I attended the staff discussed the rationale for breaking junior high classes into forty minute blocks. There was a concern for the continuity of programs for the students and a desire by staff to improve the learning structure. Another time staff discussed students who were "at risk." They were examining ways everyone could be involved in identifying and assisting these children. As a community they felt a responsibility for helping each other with these children. In some schools each

individual teacher is left to their own devices to work with the child.

Rose believes that in order to have good programs for kids teachers must have time to work together, share ideas, plan programs and discuss issues. This type of teacher collaboration takes a great deal of time and Rose not only makes allowances for this planning but she encourages and supports teacher co-operative planning. Teachers at the same grade level are assigned one period a week in which they can work together, planning and discussing programs and students. "It's the very first thing we timetable. A lot of times people say you can't timetable it. You **can** timetable it if it's first **and** it's first. "

Teachers are encouraged to see themselves as professionals who collaborate with colleagues to develop the best program possible for children. I was able to participate in such a meeting and it took place at noon. The teachers had taken all of the preparation time that had been available and were continuing at another time. They cared enough about the children and this process to meet afterwards.

**A Sense of Community Flourishes**

Creating a caring school community in a school of six hundred students is difficult. For Rose it was important to establish a place where individuals knew one another and were there to support one another. To accomplish this Rose believes "in building communities, the community in the classroom or that community in the whole school." Maple School has been organized so

that a group of four classrooms form a small community within the school. These groups get together for special days, work together on projects and develop a buddy system/team approach where older students work with younger students. "There's a sense of community between classes." The building of the small community groupings within the larger school community offers a secure learning environment in which children thrive.

Rose and her colleagues also feel that it is important to look to the outside community and the world and for students to think beyond the classroom walls. As the student population is comprised of many ethnic groups, multicultural events and teachings play an important part in the school's activities and celebrations. Rose also believes that it is important that her actions are supportive of her philosophy.

When a new school opened next to Maple she extended an invitation to the staff of the new school to a welcoming social event at Maple School. Then a few weeks later the staff at Maple hosted a pot luck supper for their new colleagues. The result of these "get togethers" was a joint assembly of students from both schools for the occasion of the planting of a friendship tree at a point where both school yards meet. In a thank-you note the principal of the new school states that "this friendship tree will remind us each spring with its blossoms about the strong bond that was established between the two schools." Rose's comment is, "It just goes to show you what can happen." This caring individual and her staff extended the initial welcome to the new school in the community. In return this gesture of kindness was reciprocated by another act of

friendliness and kindness. And what if the initial action had not occurred?

Maple is a very special community. Rose has clearly decided what is important for her as an educational leader. She has enunciated this to her staff and together they have decided what they want the school to look like, the way they want things to be. Care for others, honouring human potential, seeing the uniqueness of every individual, respect, all form the basis for making decisions about the practices in the school. Fairness and justice are subsumed under the belief that to care about the welfare of another is a prerequisite to action. This demonstration of care is not superficial; it is the basis for life and work at Maple School.

## Chapter 5

## REFLECTIONS

> Trust is a prerequisite for all healthy human development. ... Only in an atmosphere of security can the child grow in the right direction and only in this medium does the world reveal itself to the child. Should this security be missing , then the world remains a shocking, threatening, encroaching power. ... The need for a realm of security is true for all human living. It is true for adults but especially for children who, because of their age and level of maturity, may feel more vulnerable, helpless or dependent. ...That is why we must cultivate this feeling of security in a trusted realm.
>
> Otto Bollnow (pp.5-6, 1988)

Bollnow's thoughts about trust lead me back to what I believed a caring school should be. As I complete this piece of work on the meaning of care for educational leaders, I am convinced that caring leaders in caring schools are there for the other, are concerned for their well-being and desire the development of moral human beings. We will know these moral human beings because they treat others fairly and justly in a caring manner. As I reflect on the community at Maple School, I believe that the commitment to cultivate an atmosphere of trust and care for all members of the community was evident in the actions of the individuals there. Rose, a caring educational leader with a strong personal philosophy and identity, was a model for others in the school.

Connelly and Clandinin in Teachers as Curriculum Planners (1991) argue that educational leaders should be people who care and

have personal experiences rich with "beliefs, values, and personal outlooks." Like many of the authors (Blackmore, Barth, Noddings, Sergiovanni, Shakeshaft) quoted in my study, they are uncomfortable with the business and management terms attributed to principals because they believe that education is a people vocation. The language of teaching, classrooms and administration should be oriented to people. The authors believe that a personal philosophy, the way one thinks about oneself in teaching situations, is crucial for both teachers and administrators. This philosophy must not be just the words of our beliefs and values and but should also include our "action preferences" as well (p. 66). A leader's personal philosophy is related to decision making, school environment, professional development and interactions with staff. Connelly and Clandinin believe that it is possible to be self-conscious about one's philosophy and to articulate it for purposes of discussion (p. 194). Rose does just this. She not only articulates her philosophy but, as she describes, she "walks the talk." Her caring is visible in her actions.

With Rose, we do not have the garden variety of leadership. As one of her administrator colleagues in the school stated, "That is what the beauty is of visionary leadership. We're not really dealing with the nitty gritty. We're dealing with our heads and we are thinking." During my visits to the school, I noted that Rose chose not to focus on the managerial work of administration. It was not that she thought these were unimportant. She believed that the administrative team should work together to deal with time tabling, budget, newsletters, and other administrative duties. The "nitty

gritty" tasks were divided so that the visionary and human aspects of leadership, which she believes are more important, would receive the time necessary to develop. It was not so much what Rose chose to do with her time as what she chose not to do.

I have used the word pedagogy when describing people's actions in Maple School. van Manen, in his work *The Tact of Teaching* (1990) discusses the meaning of pedagogy. He states that "the original Greek idea of pedagogy has associated with it the meaning of *leading* in the sense of accompanying the child and living with the child in such a way as to provide direction and care for his or her life." He reasons that caring teachers and caring schools will tend to effect not only "a caring orientation in the students themselves but also a caring school climate (which) sponsors the conditions for personal growth itself" (pp. 34-35)." He advocates that, as adults, we must build our understanding of what it is like to be in the world as a child and with children. Similar to Noddings, van Manen believes that adults must learn to be thoughtful beings by seeing, listening and reflecting on responses to others. Through this thoughtfulness we become more tactful individuals. Our actions are based on knowledge that comes from "the heart as well as from the head" (1986, p. 12). These ideas have meaningful implications for being a caring educational leader who is nourishing care in a school.

During an interview with Dr. Debra Shogan, author of *Care and Moral Motivation*, I asked her how we might create caring schools. She replied, "Caring environments are created by virtue of fairly regular attention to people caring about one another. It becomes a vicious kind of thing because you could ask the question of how do

you get people starting to care about each another. There have to be at least some people in that community who do demonstrate genuine caring about one another. In a fairly regular way the attention has to be drawn to that. I don't think it can be taught in a lecture kind of way or a demand on children. It is seeing people who care. It can't be taken for granted or left to chance" (April, 1992).

The Foster quotation in Chapter 1 stated, "If theory doesn't serve, inform and change our moral and critical practice, it is of no help." (1986, p. 29) So in keeping with Foster and with Shogan's thoughts that children should be drawn to the idea of care my goal in completing my thesis was not only to understand better what caring leadership is but also to improve my own practice as an educational leader. Student discipline and how children are treated in discipline situations has been a concern for me. As my research continued during the last three years I believed that as educators we should be helping children to learn from their mistakes or misbehaviors. Often I saw children being punished without pedagogic thought. My goal was to work with teachers, parents, and students to develop a thoughtful, caring discipline policy which would help children.

I agree with David Purpel's (*The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education*) suggestion that the development of social skills must be guided. He believes that our culture focuses on individual competition rather than community building. His particular concern is with democratic communities. "Democratic communities need constant nurturance and attention to remain dynamic and responsive. This means more than *learning about*; it also means learning *to do*;" (p.127). His thoughts, along with my other readings, discussions and

observations of Rose caused me to look at discipline not so much as punishment but as an opportunity for growth and development of social skills. Fortunately I was not the only person in my school with these beliefs and I was able to work with a committee to develop a policy for our school. (see Appendix 1)

"It all started with Rose. She asked me that question, '*What is your vision for this school*?' and here I am ready to go on my own. Carry on that tradition to whatever extent or whatever speed, whatever the openness is of the staff I inherit or the traditions I can follow. There will never be another Maple, another ten years like I had with Rose." These are the words of Rose's administrative colleague who is about to begin his journey as a principal. He has recounted the leadership experience and skills he has learned from Rose. She had a tremendous impact on him as a leader and as I find myself continuing to struggle with my life as an educational leader, I revisit my short time in Maple School and think what possibilities ten years have to offer. I too feel that I was privileged to have had the experience of working with Rose.

As I complete my work, I wish to refer back to my question of how feminist thought and literature have much to offer educational leadership. I have used the work of Sergiovanni and believe he is very supportive of feminist thought. My concern about his work is that he does not give enough credit to feminist writers for their contribution to educational thought. They are mentioned only in passing, yet much of what he has to offer has been already developed by these women (Blackmore, Noddings, Gilligan). Noddings believes that the "maternal voice" must be heard when we look to make

changes in schools. I believe that the works of feminist authors must be acknowledged and reviewed as we look to improving schools for children and those who work in schools. It is the idea of care and community that must be included.

In *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, (1987) M. Scott Peck offers an analogy of a gem to describe the meaning of community. "The seeds of community reside in humanity-a social species-just as a gem originally resides in the earth. But it is not a gem, only a potential one" (p. 60). The potential stone must be cut and polished before it becomes a gem and we see its beauty. It is in a similar fashion that a group becomes a community - through cutting, polishing and hard work. "Once cut and polished, it is something beautiful. ... The gem of community is so exquisitely beautiful it may seem unreal to you" (p. 60) Rose and the community of Maple School have planted the seeds of humanity and I offer the following excerpt taken from my field notes as a testament for a caring school community:

> One early dismissal day at 2:15 in the afternoon, I was sitting in the waiting area outside the main office. Two grade 3 girls sat on a chair close to me, waiting for a ride home. The assistant principal walked by and as he did so both girls leapt to their feet, rushed to him and gave him a hug good-bye. He returned their hug, smiled warmly and bid them a good-bye. Junior high students strolled down the hallway talked to friends, shouted friendly greetings and made plans for the evening. A few younger students, accompanied by older students, moved out the doors. The second assistant principal stood with the counselor just outside the office door. As students walked by, the two staff members would joke with the students or exchange pleasantries. Teachers were busy bringing music stands and handbells into the library for the staff development day. They were joking among themselves

and sharing events of the day. I felt comfortable as I was sitting there. People showed consideration and thoughtfulness towards one another. There was a feeling of warmth and care.

In many other schools I have visited on staff meeting day, often teachers could be heard shouting at the students. Students were told to hurry and get out of the school. The school staff was anxious to be free of the students so that they could get to their meeting and go home. Yet in Maple School, there was no urgency to rid the hallways of students. There was no shouting at students. I felt that students had a place in their home away from home.

It is important in this time of school restructuring that the stories of caring, nurturing women leaders be told. It is important because few women's stories have been told but it is also important that leaders caught in the managerial, bureaucratic mold have an opportunity to think about and see the possibilities of caring leadership. The school and people described above are genuine and to accomplish what they have should be celebrated.

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## APPENDIX 1

## DEVELOPING A SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

Before a policy was written for the school, a group of interested individuals, staff and parents met to share our thoughts. This began when the counselor, two parents and I attended a one day workshop on anti-violence. The discipline debate was a topic of concern to everyone at the school and though much discussion occurred during previous years nothing had been documented regarding school policy.

Because of my interest in the ethic of care, it was important for me that when we developed our discipline policy that we always kept in the back of our minds the question, " Is this a caring way to treat children? Is this a just way to approach a misbehavior?"

Books and materials I had used for my thesis and others that were purchased for the school were used for discussion purposes. Our team decided to collect some of our thoughts based on our research and then discuss these with the entire staff.

It was my task to put this information together. Again the thought kept crossing my mind - "Is this something that is important only to what I believe? Is this imposing my way of doing thins? Will people be afraid to critique or add further information?"

Once the philosophy was written our group expanded to include a teacher from each grade level. Each teacher was given the material to read and at our first meeting the counselor and I explained the rationale behind the document. Parent committee

members, as well as some additional parents, were also given a copy to review.

The teacher committee group met again to analyze the document and to provide input. The policy is now at the stage where consequences for inappropriate behavior need to be included. We were not pleased with the present system of having children sent down to the office for misbehaviors as there was no clear way to work things through if the administrators were teaching or not available. A school policy was not in operation. We wanted to have a process established so that the child's time would not be wasted and that we could be sure that a misbehavior would not be missed. We were looking for some consistency in the learning experience. We wanted children to know that it was important how they treated each other. My task is now difficult, for on the one hand I know what my guidelines are from the committee, however in good conscience I know that one cannot set consequences if each situation is to receive individual time and care.

I refer back to Noddings, Sergiovanni, Kohn, Shogan and search for answers. I believe it is important to inclusive in the development of our policy. Children must have an opportunity to offer their ideas and suggestions and discuss the need for such a policy. It is important to remember that not only must children learn to read, write and compute but that they also have a commitment to society and a responsibility for their actions.

A new initiative in education realms seems to be for zero tolerance regarding violence in schools. It takes away our responsibility as educators to work with children, to help them

learn from their mistakes, to give them a second chance. It seems to me that with zero tolerance we discard children like so much garbage. Though we will not tolerate violent behavior at our school, as educators we must always talk with children about their behavior. Through our talking and actions, children should learn about their responsibilities and obligations. Instead of using our time to punish children, we will help children learn from their mistakes and make better choices in their actions. I have included our policy with the hope that our work make provide you with some ideas.

**A School-wide Model for a Caring School Community**
**School Philosophy**

We believe that our school should be a caring, nurturing school environment that is **safe** for children physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and psychologically. We believe we must provide children with opportunities to distinguish behaviors that are violent or disrespectful to others and to make restitution for inappropriate actions. Also, we believe that we need to provide opportunities for children to practice and gain the skills in care-giving and to develop characteristics of caring people.

A sense of trust among all must be attained before our philosophy can be established. We do not only encourage our students to care but we show them how to care by creating caring relations with them.

## Characteristics of a Caring School Community

A caring school community will exhibit the following :

* A positive and supportive school climate in which staff are committed to the creation of meaningful respectful relationships with both students and other staff members.

* The teaching of core values basic to human needs: care, kindness, respect for others, honesty, and fairness. These should include civic values inherent in democracy: equality, tolerance and justice.

* School-wide expectations for student behavior within and outside of the classroom with the understanding that if students are acting inappropriately or violate another person restitution must be made for their actions.

* School-wide anger management/conflict resolution strategies that are uniformly accepted and applied. Staff professional development and student training in these areas will be fundamental to the approach.

* Involvement of parents/guardians in this method and approach to enable the school and home to work together in developing and implementing our strategies.

* Involvement of students in programs dealing with prevention and intervention strategies. Some programs may include: Lion's Quest Bully-proofing Program, Rainbow Program, leadership training, conflict resolution/student mediation teams, peer support teams. (see resources for explanation)

* Non-confrontational approaches for dealing with incidents of student violence.

* Interagency cooperation so that community groups, whether recreational or social services, be included on the organization and implementation of our plan.

* The value of exiting programs in the school and community are affirmed: Quest, Family School Liaison, Family Community Support Services.

As the Creating a Caring School Community(CCSC) Team continues to meet the most responsible people or groups will be chosen for the above.

**Preventive Discipline/Self Discipline/Consequences**

*If you try to enforce duty only by the sword of state, you never create a moral being who has any interest in compliance or who feels obligated to do anything other than simply avoid the penalties of law.*

Benjamin Barber

The goal of our program is for children to learn self-discipline not to simply **avoid** "breaking the rules". Power is not the name of the game. We are not looking for external moral judgements but to have children look inside themselves to find the answers about how to treat others.

According to Nel Noddings "When we live in a caring relation, we teach each other gently by example and by confirmation-not by accusation, confession, forgiveness, and penance". (p. 95)

**Why Consequences versus Punishment**

Punishment often focuses on the problem rather than the solution. It is often hurtful to the child in a physical or an emotional way. The punished child resents or fears the punisher and will try to hide the truth.

Our goal is to help children, to provide opportunities for them to learn from their mistakes in a safe and caring atmosphere.

**The goals of good discipline are to:**

* allow children to learn from their mistakes.

* avoid a similar problem in the future by the child's learning a better behavior.

* be reasonable, carried out in a calm, non-critical way.

* have the children responsible for changing their own behavior with the guidance of an adult in the school

* be relevant and have a natural consequence.

* help children learn how to accept their human frailties, to fix their mistakes, and to identify their needs.

**Restitution versus Punishment**

Restitution is the action of repairing damage done. It takes into account the negative act, the effect on the victim and how the victim should be compensated. Rather than focusing on the wrong-doing, time is spent working together to find a way to make amends. The child has an opportunity to learn from a mistake as opposed to feeling like a failure. Restitution is an approach to strengthen children. It is a collaborative process which teaches children to seek solutions to problems. The emphasis on values shows the children they have rights but also leads them to think and care about others and to develop the altruistic self.

The process of restitution should build stronger people because one cannot change what has been done but one can change what one does in the future.

**Characteristics of restitution:**

* Satisfactory amends are made to the victim.

* Strengthens the person who has offended.

* Tied to a higher value, mission statement.

* Effort is required from the offender.

* Relevant to the offense where possible.

* Little incentive for repetition of the offense.

* No resentment by the planner/helper.

* Restraint of criticism, guilt, or anger.

**How to achieve a restitution with the child:**

* Talk about the value to be protected - what we believe.

* Frame the restitution to include both the child's needs and the needs of the teacher or group.

* Allow the student time to create a personal solution.

**Restitution options:**

* Fix

* Pay back

* Say two positives about the person.

* Give time in lieu.

**School Expectations for Student Behavior:**

**1. Show care, consideration, and respect for yourself, others, and the environment:**

-Make careful choices to take care of yourself in school.
-Help others solve problems that occur in the classroom or on the playground.
-Remember that everyone has feelings so think about how you treat others- treat others as you would want to be treated.

**2. Use words to solve your problems:**

-Keep hands, feet, objects to yourself.

-Control your temper - count to 10.
-Ask for help if you can not handle the situation.
-Talk to others in a positive way.

3. **Be responsible for your own actions and learning.**
-Work when you are supposed to.
-Turn in completed assignments on time.
-Have your pencils, books, and paper ready to begin class.

4. **Safety comes first:**
-Think, "Is this safe? Will I hurt someone?"
-Walk in the classroom and in the hallways.
-Rough play is not appropriate at ABCs because it may hurt others.
-Throwing objects in the classroom is not safe.

5. **Be polite:**
-Use proper language.
-Listen to the person speaking.
-Raise your hand and wait for permission to speak.
-Say "Please" and "Thank-you".
-Speak quietly so that others can learn.
-Smile

**Procedures for Creating a Caring School Community**

This section contains the "how to's" for creating a caring school community. A two-prong approach is necessary in developing a caring school. Children must not only know what unacceptable behavior is but also be able to act towards others and themselves in a caring way. As children experience the world we must provide for them opportunities to learn and practice skills in defining and understanding what inappropriate behavior is and what caring actions are.

To ensure that students are taking responsibility for following ABCs expectations and rules a list of *possible* consequences would

be drafted. This list would be used to talk with children so that they may begin to understand that as a result of an inappropriate action or behavior there are consequences, responsibility on their part to make things right.

To ensure that children develop thoughtful and caring characteristics as people a school-wide "CARE" program would be developed and followed.

To ensure that staff are on a similar philosophical plane and are approaching children in a similar way a review of our mission statement, guidelines, policy, curriculum materials and process would be completed the first week of school. An evaluation of the policy and model would occur several times during the year to ensure we were on track. The school counselor and vice principal will conduct a staff training session to review strategies and curriculum.

**Classroom program**

Classroom teachers with the counselor and the vice-principal will instruct an awareness program to: define violent behavior and actions; define bullying characteristics for example. pushing, name-calling, threatening, gossiping; role-play conflict resolution techniques; define helping and care-giving practices. The counselor and vice-principal would be involved so that a common thread would run throughout the school when defining these behaviors. Since the school staff has been trained in the Lion's Quest Program, the themes and curriculum program would enhance and build on the

information presented to the students during the first month of school.

Teachers would be responsible for setting up their own classroom rules and responsibilities which reflect the school-wide policy with their students. If a child is not able to cope with these and is a threat to others in the class or to him/herself the teacher would request the assistance of the "CARE" team(to be developed). A special program would be developed for this child. As the needs of children differ greatly, it is impossible here to define the program. All concerned would be consulted so that the best program possible would be set.

**School-wide consequence procedures**

Children and staff would attend an assembly the first day back in the school year. During the assembly the principal and Creating a Caring School Community (CS) team would present our ideas to all present. A theme day based on the Lion's Quest Program first unit "Building a School Community" would happen with many ideas from the CCSC policy presented at activity centres. The stage would be set.

Consequences for thoughtless and inappropriate behavior would be discussed with the students. This would not be done in a threatening manner however. If children are to understand the process and are to make thoughtful decisions they must also know they have responsibilities and obligations attached to their behaviors. It would only be fair to inform them that if the school expectations are not met there would be consequences for their

actions. A child's decision to act in a certain way would then be based on a more informed choice and will then provide a basis from which discussion and learning can take place.

The school's expectation for students would be posted in each classroom and in the hallways. The expected behaviors of students would be revisited often and would be publicized as necessary. Staff would model desired behaviors and exhibit caring in their treatment of others.

***Possible*** **consequences for making inappropriate behavior choices**

-check for understanding of misbehavior as an intervention technique; a way to help children relate the behavior to the schools' expectations and to ensure that they understand why their behavior is inappropriate.

-verbal warning from the teacher(depending on the seriousness)

-name written in the consequence book in the office if behavior is serious. If name appears more than three times in a month the child will meet with the counselor to discuss difficulties and develop strategies for dealing with these.

-restitution to be made to injured person(s)

-loss of recess, free time or rewarding activity (computer time, centre time etc.) and instead, helping someone in the office or the school.

-call home to describe one's behavior and have a caring act set as a restitution.

-presenting information to a class about caring behaviors

-role playing the victim of the same behavior with a teacher

-home program to be initiated (see form)

-making an "I Caught You Caring" poster or button for use in the school

-recommendation to meet with counselor to discuss behavior

-observing the playground at recess time and recording acts of kindness and then sharing this with someone

-tutoring another student

-spending time on the "Friendship Bench" to think by oneself or to talk to injured party to sort out problem (adult assistance required)

-writing a report about an altruistic leader

-completing activities/sheets from the special consequence file before they may return to the classroom or outside if they have been given a time-out in the office or a suspension

-time-out in classroom

-time-out in office carrol (time to depend on severity of action, recurrence of misbehaviors, circumstances)

-suspension from school (extreme situation)

Some individuals may feel that there are inconsistencies in relation to establishing consequences and enforcing the rules. We must remember that each situation is not the same nor is each child. If we use the analysis of a child who is having difficulty with reading, we know that we would use different techniques to help the child learn. It is the same with behavior difficulties, children need individualized help. All factors must be taken into consideration - the circumstances, the severity of the situation, the number of

times the child has been in difficulty. We should always keep in mind that our responsibility as educators is to help children learn from their mistakes. If they are to become thoughtful, caring citizens they must take responsibility for their actions we can't predetermine a consequence for each misbehavior. Each situation must be dealt with carefully and individually.

**Promoting Caring Behaviors**

A list of possible ways to enhance and highlight caring behavior in the school; creating opportunities for learning about being a caring person.

-based on the Lion's Quest Program taught in the classroom, highlight school ideas that promote the same theme school wide

-counselor to meet weekly with different classes to review goals of the CCSC policy

-implement weekly classroom meetings to reinforce caring behaviors within the classroom

- teachers/staff to keep a log book on "acts of kindness" they've seen in the classroom or on the playground

-continue student leadership care group, which in the past has been involved in passing out rewards to students who have been kind to others and have this group plan more activities that recognize students

-read thought for the day that focuses on theme for the month

-students recognize other students for caring behavior and the student selected is recognized during assembly, picture is displayed in a certain area, or wears a special CARE button

-a school wide celebration of cultural differences

-invite care-givers/positive role models/heroes into the school to talk about their life to children

-promote non-sexist behavior: role play ways men are care-givers at home and encourage boys to practice this; provide opportunities for girls to do activities that we may in the past have only asked boys, i.e. moving chairs, carrying boxes

-train a group of students in problem-solving techniques and have them become a "Problem Solvers Team"

-invite the Lion's Quest Parent team in to role play problem solving techniques in the family and with friends

-invite other agencies into the school to inform them about our goals for the year

-hold parent information meetings about Creating a Caring School Community so that they are informed and we can work as a team

-create a prominent display area for setting up an instrument for evaluating the school's successes/atmosphere etc.

-have a suggestion box so that the CCSC committee can involve everyone in the planning of various activities

-evaluate often

The information to develop the above ideas was taken from many sources and many similar ideas were found in all the books. Complementary ideas were combined for our purpose and our needs. Except for the restitution definitions direct quotations were not

made and therefore it is not possible to acknowledge each author for a specific idea. The authors and books are listed in the bibliography.

## APPENDIX 2
## RESOURCES

Albert , L . (1992 ) . An Administrator's Guide to Cooperative Discipline . Minnesota : American Guidance Service .

This guide provides not only administrators but all school staff with information, skills and strategies for working with students. Albert's philosophy is that students should have opportunities to become capable, connected, and contributing members of the school community and suggests that students work through difficulties by taking responsibility for their own actions. School staff are encouraged to implement a program of cooperative discipline through communication, collaboration and cooperation. Albert's guide is a useful tool for a school staff who wish to treat a student's misbehavior in a caring and respectful way.

Albert , L . (1989 ) . A Teacher's Guide to Cooperative Discipline . Minnesota : American Guidance Service .

Albert's teacher's guide is a companion piece to the above. Albert works from the premise that the best system of discipline involves the students in sharing the responsibility for their actions. She believes that there must be consequences for misbehavior however when these "consequences aren't related, reasonable, and respectful, they turn into punishments". (p 79) Punishment makes cooperative discipline and positive learning experiences impossible. I found this book very useful when working with students. It provided a thoughtful guide to understanding children's behaviors. As a teacher or administrator care must be taken when working with children who are misbehaving and this book helped sort out difficult situations.

Barr , L . & Gerber , C . (1990) . Skills for Growing . Ohio : Quest International

The Lions-Quest Skills for Growing program focuses on two main outcomes. One outcome is to help young people develop positive social behaviors, some of which are: self-discipline; respect for self and others; compassion, caring and concern for others; responsibility for oneself and others; trustworthiness and honesty. Another focus is to help young people develop positive commitments to their families, schools, peers, and communities. Before the program can be implemented by a school a training session for staff and parents is conducted. This is a very positive program that can be easily integrated into regular academic classes or can become part of the health component for students. For a staff who wishes to focus and develop a caring school environment this is an excellent program. Permission to duplicate valuable resources and materials is given to participants.

Barr , L . & Gerber , C . (1987) . Skills for Adolescence . Ohio : Quest International

This is a continuation of the Skills for Growing program and builds on the philosophy begun at the elementary and middle school level. A school may institute the program for adolescents even though students may not have had the previous instruction. A strong component of this program is to develop a sense of responsibility and self worth in students. Another important feature of the program is the discussion of issues of great concern to adolescents.

Coloroso , B . (1981, 1990) . Discipline: Creating a Positive School Climate . Colorado : kids are worth it ! .

The underlying philosophy in Coloroso's material is that students have the right to be in school but with that right comes the responsibility to respect others and treat them with dignity and worth and for students to be productively involved in their own learning. Coloroso believes that children need a safe place where they can be themselves and learn to know themselves. Using this basic philosophy Coloroso distinguishes between punishment and discipline, provides suggestions for developing a positive school climate where

staff members see the value in building a trust relationship with children. This basic philosophy of respect for self and others should guide everyone's actions and also provides the basis for helping each student individually in discipline situations.

Coloroso , B . (1990) . Winning at Parenting ... without beating your kids ! Colorado : kids are worth it ! .

Following the same philosophy as above, Coloroso offers suggestions to parents "about helping children become responsible, caring, loving individuals who know *how to think*, not just *what* to *think*."(p.5) This work is an excellent companion to Discipline: Creating a Positive School Climate so that the school and parents can work together from a common understanding.

Coloroso , B . (1990) . Winning at Teaching ... without beating your kids . Colorado : kids are worth it ! .

This is more of the same from Coloroso except that it is focused on teachers and is more directly related to the classroom. She offers suggestions to teachers for creating a safe, caring classroom where students are responsible for themselves and others.

Fitness Canada . (1990) . Student Leadership Development Program . The Canadian Intramural Recreation Association

The Student Leadership Development Program was written primarily for student groups operating school intramural programs. The materials however are a valuable set of resources for teachers working with leadership groups in a school as the materials provide instruction guidelines for developing individual and group skills. The school leadership group works to become a team which practices cooperation rather than competition through learning such skills as effective communication, problem-solving and decision-making.

Fluegelman , A . (1976) . The New Games Book . New York : Dolphin Books

Fluegelman's book includes a collection of non-competitive cooperative games which encourages children to play for fun and the enjoyment each other's company.

Gossen , D . (1992) . Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline . North Carolina : New View Publications.

Gossen uses an approach to discipline that recognizes that all people make mistakes and that we can learn from them. By focusing on how an individual can correct a mistake rather than on punishment, positive solutions can be reached without diminishing the individual. As with the programs of Coloroso and Albert children take responsibility for their own actions and find ways of making things right. "Restitution is the product of the interrelationship of three variables: the person I want to be, my social conscience or how I want to be treated by others, and the value to be protected". (p.122)

Huggins , P . (1991) . Creating a Caring Classroom . Colorado : Sopris West

Huggins , P . (1990) . Teaching Cooperation Skills . Colorado : Sopris West

The above works by Huggins comprise part of Project ASSIST validated by the Washington State Department of Education for school use. Similar to the Lions Quest Program, ASSIST is an affective education program designed to increase students' growth in the areas of self-concept, interpersonal relationships, and emotional understanding. (p.1) All materials are reproducible and provide educators with innumerable resources for individual and cooperative group activities.

Johnson , W. , Johnson R . T . & Holubec , E. (1991) . Cooperation in the Classroom . Minnesota : Interaction Book Company .

The authors believe that learning situations may be structured so that students compete with each other, ignore each other and work independently, **or** work together cooperatively. (p. iv) The theory, research and practical experience of 25 years is

found in this book. Emphasis is placed on the need for educator training and the book acts as a guide to provide practical strategies for structuring cooperative learning groups and specific suggestions for teaching collaborative skills to students. The focus of students who learn and work alone shifts to students who care about where, how and if classmates are learning.

Kohn , A . (1990) The Brighter Side of Human Nature: Altruism and Empathy in Everyday Life . U.S.A. : Basic Books

Kohn's work provides an excellent philosophical understanding for educators who are concerned about how children treat others in school and elsewhere. This book should be read before any discipline plan is created. Kohn believes that what is needed "is a morality of thought and of feeling, of principle and of care." (p. 265)

Molyneux , L . (1992) . Cooperative Learning, Science and Success . New York : Trellis Books

This is a book that may be used by educators to continue the development of cooperative skills in another subject area. Child tested interactive science activities combined with an explanation about how cooperative aspects can be implemented make this a useful resource.

Newman , F . (1993) . Children in Crisis . Canada: Scholastic

If we, as educators wish to create caring individuals we must in turn understand the needs of children. This book is an invaluable resource for helping us to understand the tough issues facing troubled children. It also "provides us with *bottom-up* strategies rather than a *top-down* authoritarian mechanisms and shows real ways to cope, to thrive and to enable true learning". (p.iii)

Noddings , N . (1992) . The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education . New York: Teachers College Press

Noddings invites us to question our way of thinking about education. She argues that we need a radical change in

curriculum and teaching methods. She believes that all people have different strengths and that these strengths should be cultivated in a caring not competitive environment. Her work addresses the practical as well as the theoretical aspects of organizing a caring school community.

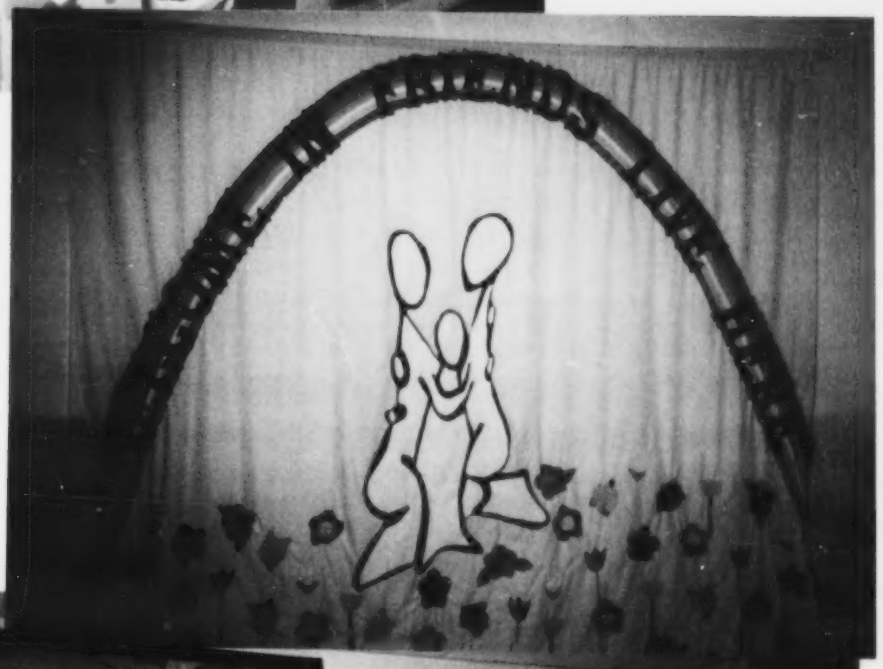
Orlick , T . (1976) . The Cooperative Sports & Games Book . New York : Pantheon Books

Orlick , T . (1982) . The Second Cooperative Sports & Games Book . New York : Pantheon Books

Orlick argues that children are being taught to push, shove, hit, and that other people's feelings don't count .

# APPENDIX 3

## PICTURES AND DOCUMENTS



**Please Note:** We do not send report cards home with our students. Without the student portfolio the report card does not give enough information. The purpose of the reporting period is to have your child demonstrate what has been learned and the teacher and parent will make the meaningful links.

**Scheduling:** Each conference is twenty minutes in length. We would like parents to phone in and begin scheduling their appointments on **Thursday, March 7th.**

**Fri. March 15th:** • Rumor has it the leprechauns will visit us on this day

**Thurs. March 21st:** **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

- This will be a special day of celebration for all students and staff. We have invited special guests and we will have our students involved in a number of meaningful activities.The afternoon will be a celebration focusing on our unity and appreciation of one another.
- We have received a grant from Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada to help us focus on this day.

**Fri. March 22nd:** • We dismiss at 12:15 P.M. for our Spring Break and return on Tuesday, April 2nd.

**Additional Information**

**IBM Computers:** We are pleased to announce that seven IMB computers have been donated to our school. These are 1985 computers, in excellent condition, and they will serve our students well. The Company who donated them wishes to remain anonymous but we will indeed forward them a letter of appreciation.

**Student Teachers:** We welcome nine student teachers to our school. They are involved in an eight week practicum and we are more than pleased to be working with them. These teachers always add a rich dimension to our staff and we look forward to being part of their development.

# DISCOVERING OUR PERSONAL CREED

I believe.....We believe.....

.. As educators we have many beliefs which reflect our own personal philosophy of education.

.. Take a few minutes and write <u>one</u> "I Believe" statement which is significant to you personally.

"I believe _____

_____

_____

.. Join up with two other educators. In your group of three begin to share with one another your personal belief.

.. Working co-operatively, come up with one belief statement which reflects the values shared by all three. Your written response should be recorded on the hand out. We believe _____

_____

_____

.. All members of your group must agree on the belief statement.

.. Show your agreement by signing your name to the statement.

.. Any member of your group should be prepared to share the "we believe" statement with the rest of the large group.

# VALUES MODEL

| |
|---|
| . Expect error in the learning process. |
| . Challenge the error. |
| . Instruct in the acceptable mode of learning. |
| . Affirm the good in the student repeatedly. |
| . Forgive and be able to forget. |

| |
|---|
| RESULT: Freedom to Grow |

WITH
ALL THE COLO
CANADA
WOR
Proud

# "BUILDING COMMUNITY"
## Group Activity
## "Team Building"

A variety of projects may be undertaken to help us reach the goals of our 'School Awareness' project.

Within your group discuss:

**Individual Classroom Projects**

. Include student awareness activities.
. Include classroom display ideas.

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Community "Team-Building" Projects**

. Plan activities that will encourage " community" within your grouping.

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Total School Project- Reaching Out**

. Plan a project (as a community) that would contribute to the total learning environment.

_____

_____

_____

LOVE
SPOKEN
HERE

WELCOME

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG

## TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG
### "Staff Awareness"

The staffroom is a special environment, a private space where we can grow professionally, where we get our strength and support from one another.

1. How can we be professionally strong for one another when we come into this space? Take the time to focus on ways we can.

    . be open to one another
    . affirm one another
    . support one another
    . encourage one another

_____

_____

_____

Staff members have the power and the need to support each other in ways that make school a better place for all.

2. In what ways do the staff members in our school support each other?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Is there any way that we can improve this support of each other, as a professional working community? _____

# The Rose

When we plant a rose seed in the earth
we notice that it is small,
but we do not criticize it as "rootless and stemless".

We treat it as a seed giving it water and
nourishment required of a seed.
When it first shoots up out of the earth,
we don't condemn it as immature
and underdeveloped; nor do we criticize the buds
for not being open when they appear.

We stand in wonder at the process taking place
and give the plant the care it needs
at each stage of its development.

The rose is a rose from the time it is a seed
to the time it dies, within it,
at all times it contains its whole potential.

It seems to be constantly in the process of change;
yet at each state, at each moment,
it is perfectly all right as it is.

Roy